Tuesday, February 1, 2011 ★★ Sundays / Vol. 26 / No. 55 P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert: Text INQ to 2333 for INQ7 alerts

EGYPT'S HIGHEST ... A youth waves an Egyptian flag as a military helicopter flies overhead thousands of antigovernment protesters gathered for a sixth day in Liberation Square in Cairo on Tuesday. Egyptian Air Force fighter planes also flew overhead and sent a strong tactic appeal to the several square where protesters were demanding ousted President Hosni Mubarak's exit. AFP/B. ABDO

PH economy grows at fastest pace in 24 yrs

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

By Gaea T. Cabacungan

THE PHILIPPINE economy grew at its fastest pace last year since the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution, expanding 7.3 percent due to strong domestic demand fueled by the billions of dollars overseas Filipino workers sent home.

Government data showed gross domestic product (GDP)—the total value of goods and services produced in the country—rose a scorching

TO ECONOMY, A7

Egypt opposition calls for 1 million on streets

CAIRO—A coalition of opposition groups called for a million people to take to Cairo's streets on Tuesday to outchase up pressure the President Hosni Mubarak to leave.

Attention and other social leaders were also ramping up pressure for an orderly transition to a democratic system.

The coalition of groups including the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood said it wanted the march from Tahrir, or Liberation, Square to force Mubarak to step down by Friday.

The groups also called for a general strike on Monday, although much of Cairo remained shut down, with government offices and private businesses closed.

"We don't want life to go back to normal, but until Mubarak leaves. We want people to abandon their jobs until he leaves," Issam Abdel Fattah, one of the protest organizers and son of the founders of the April 6 group, a grass-roots movement of young people that has been pushing for democratic reformation since 2008.

Banks, schools and the stock market were shut for the second working day. Long lines formed outside bakeries as people tried to replenish their stores of bread, the main source of sustenance for most Egyptians.

Protest were seized off the main road to Liberation Square, a central downtown plaza that demonstrators have occupied since Friday, turning it into the national le-

EGYPT, A6

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Low-pressure area to bring heavy rains, says Pagasa / A9

Rep. Singson pleads guilty to drugs raps

Solon faces sentencing in HK today

HONG KONG—Philippine Rep. Ronald Singson yesterday pleaded guilty to trafficking drugs into Hong Kong last year after a routine binge in Manila was followed by a spur-of-the-moment decision to head to the gambling enclave of Macau.

The court heard testimony that the lawmaker hid the drug in his underpants to elude airport security.

Singson was not immediately sentenced in Hong Kong's District Court pending testimony on whether he planned on assisting the customs in charging it with other—as-yet-to-be-filed—cases that could influence the length of his sentence.

He was caught carrying cocaine at the southern Chinese city's international airport in July. Drug trafficking carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of HK$5 million (US$640,000 or about P28 million).

Under Hong Kong law, the mere act of bringing drugs in-

HK SINGSON, A4

GUILTY PLEA Baron Ear Rep. Ronald Singson now awaits sentencing. AFP

Gov't OKs ₱1 hike for jeepney ride

By Paolo G. Montecillo

AMID PLEDGES from private groups to help ease the impact of rising fuel prices, the government has approved a ₱1 increase in the minimum jeepney fare, raising it to ₱9 in Metro Manila effective Feb. 2.

All provincial increases for provincial bus routes also approved.

"The fare hike takes effect (Wednesday)," the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) GOVT, A6

Rabusa says another AFP boss got ₱160-M 'pabaon'

By TJ Burgonio

SOME ₱160 million "pabaon" (send-off money) was allotted to then Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Diomedio Villanueva when he retired in May 2002, whistleblower George Rabusa said yesterday.

The former military budget officer said he withdrew ₱30 million in cash for Villanueva on orders of his boss, three military congressmen Carlos Garcia, Rabusa said he delivered the money to Garcia, who he assumed turned this over to Villanueva.

"I gave everything to him. The amount totaled ₱164 million, including a ₱4 million retreat. He was the one who gave it to Villanueva," he said of Gar-

cia in a phone interview.

Rabusa said he had kept copies of certifications from a manager of Security Bank on the deposits and withdrawals he made with the bank before the Anti-Money Laundering Act was enacted.

Rabusa declined to say how much retirement money Roy Cimatu, who replaced Villanueva, received, saying he would disclose this at the Senate blue ribbon committee's exemption of its hearing sched-

RABUSA, A4

CHARICE In Oprah's eyes... I'm still a baby

Oprah tells Charice: Don't fall in love, yet

By Pathole Concepcion

MANILA—Talk show host Oprah Winfrey says, Charice Pempengco for now.

"The last time we talked, she told me not to fall in love or have a boyfriend yet." The 18-year-old Filipino talented singing star said, while trying to her heartbreak and total control school.

CHARICE, A7

Reyes hits back, sues Rabusa, Estrada

By Leila B. Salaverria and Cynthia D. Rubio

EMBATTLED former defense chief Angelo Reyes yesterday filed graft charges against Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and former military budget officer George Rabusa, and cited Estrada's attempt to link him to military corruption was driven by a desire for "vengeance."

Reyes placed his name in second rule in the downfall of former President Joseph Estrada in 2001 when, as head Bureau of the Philippines chief of staff, he led military defections that culminated in Edsa II.

Reyes filed the graft charges at the Office of the Ombudsman, as he denied allegations made by Rabusa that he (Reyes) received P50 million in "pabaon" or send-off money and a PS-

REYES, A4

ALLEGED BENEFICIARIES Former Armed Forces Chiefs Roy Cimatu (at left) and Diomedio Villanueva.

ANGELO S. REYES Former AFP Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes denies the graft complaint he filed against former Lt. Col. George Rabusa and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in the Office of the Ombudsman on Monday. Rabusa (inset) claims explosive that a bombshell

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Manila	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Laoag	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Legazpi	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Puerto Princesa	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Iloilo	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Cebu	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Tacloban	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Davao	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains
Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with rains

EZ2
2D: 15 5
3D: 31 30

SUERTE 6/49
2D: 0 2 5
3D: 5 8 2
4D: 4 3 9

FOUR DIGIT
6 8 6 7

MEGA LOTTO 6/45
2 5 6 11 14 17
P15,710,660.20

6/55 GRAND LOTTO
17 20 30 33 39 50
P53,694,330.40

LOTTO | EZ2 | Suerte 6/49 | Lotto 6/42 | Mega Lotto 6/45 | 6/55 Grand Lotto

Bishops call for mass action against RH bill

By Jocelyn R. Uy and DJ Cabacungan

SAYING that the dialogue with Malacañang on the reproductive health (RH) bill only revealed the huge disconnect between the two parties on the issue, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday exhorted the faithful to consider mass action amid efforts in Congress to fast-track a family planning measure.

In a strongly worded pastoral letter, the bishops criticized their call for the rejection of the reproductive health bill, saying: "But echo the challenge we prophetically uttered 20 years ago as Edsa I and I still open all people of good will who share our conviction. Let us pray together, reason together, decide together, act together, always to the end that the truth prevail" over the many threats to human life and to our shared human and cultural values.

The Church's stance is made as lawmakers yesterday captioned a consolidated version of the bill for floor debates.

The proposed Responsible Parenthood, Reproductive Health, and Population and Development Act of 2011 (re-authored by 95 lawmakers) was scrutinized by members of the House committee on population in its public hearing yesterday.

In a press conference, Bishop Nereo Odchimar, head of the CBCP social pastoral action council and one of the bishops in charge of giving the bishops an opportunity to express their views in a friendly dialogue, "finally our dialogue has simply revealed how far apart we are on the position on" it said.

Odchimar said the pastoral letter was issued to avoid "hardening [of] positions" among the public, which the dialogue with Malacañang may result. It reiterated the objections of the Church to artificial birth control methods, which the RH bill endorses.

When asked if the Church was actually considering pulling out of the dialogue, he replied, "At this point in time, we have not yet agreed to pull out ... we have still to make any formal declaration from this dialogue."

"Again, it is a possibility," added Odchimar.

The four-page pastoral letter, titled "Choosing Life, Rejecting the RH Bill," reiterated the Church's rejection of artificial contraception and sex education in schools.

"Today, we voice he is now political circumstances and we now have to make a similar stand," said the letter, referring to Edsa I where the Church decided to participate in a civilian military revolt against the Marcos dictatorship that brought Cesario Aquino to office.

The four signees is the number of President Aquino, who supports the RH bill.

"The experience of the RH bill doesn't depend only on the President, neither on the legislatures ... it is the duty of every person who values human life to reject it," said Archbishop Socrates Villegas during the news conference.

At the House of Representatives, Bataan 2nd Dist. Rep. Hildo Zaragoza Cajayo said that opponents of the bill could air their objections during the debates.

Ifugao party-list Rep. Eduardo Gaguman, the lead proponent of the RH bill in the House, said that the bill was not pro-abortion but a protective measure for Filipinas to achieve their desired family size.

To support the bishops, the consolidated bill specifically states that abortion is illegal but it also mandates the government to provide post-abortion support to women "in a humane, non-judgmental, and compassionate manner."

The bill endorses the use of modern, health-planning methods that it defines as "safe, effective and legal methods, whether natural or artificial, that are registered with the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health."

"We [the bishops] are not out to impose our views on the people," Odchimar said.

NEWSBRIEFS

LTO chief denies anomaly

LAND Transportation Office (LTO) chief Virginia Torres has denied involvement in the registration of stolen vehicles when she headed the agency's Cebu office. In a statement, Torres dismissed the allegations as a "demolition job" by parties with vested interests in the LTO. Torres was accused of supervising the registration of a Mitsubishi Pajero in Cebu using the license number of a motorcycle registered in Bohol. "What I launched was a computerized registration of a motor vehicle previously registered in the same district office. Unfortunately pa, kulang [it] ng documentary requirements and denied. In short, kulang ang papers, kulang ang plaka, kulang ang lahat," she said. Paolo R. Montecillo

Cops eye suspects in bus bombing

POLICE are looking into the possible involvement of suspects arrested in police raids, Sulu, last week in the Makati City bus bombing that killed 6 people. Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo said yesterday. Robredo told reporters investigators had identified the group but he refused to give details. "There are some ideas as to who this group is but as we'd rather not close all the possibilities still we are very definite," Philippine National Police Director General Raul Bacalzo confirmed the arrests but said they had not yet determined the role of the suspects in last Tuesday's Makati bombing. Alinah Pajo

2nd round of toll hikes at SLEx

CALAMBA, Laguna—Another round of toll increase at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEx) will take effect today. This is the second hike this year after the Toll Regulatory Board approved a nearly 100-percent increase in toll rates last year. Instead of implementing the initial toll hikes approved by the TRB, Tollway Corp. is implementing the second of 4 increments set by the board from 12.25 a.m. on Feb. 1," said an advisory distributed to motorists at toll booths. These will be another increase next in the southern 1, until the total increase is nearly April. Walter Dick Aquino-Southern Luzon

Shell, retailers cut price of LPG

PILIPINAS Shell Petroleum Corp. and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) retailers have slashed the price of cooking gas effective today in the wake of the international contract price (ICP). Shell said it was cutting the price of its Shakane by P2.50 per kg, or P57.50 per 11-kg LPG cylinder. The other retailers announced rollbacks of P1 per kilo, according to LPG Marketers Association party-list group Rep. Lemuel Ty. This would bring the LPG prices at the cylinder companies to P800 per 11-kg tank from P858. Amy R. Remo

Water rates going up in Metro

WATER rates in Metro Manila are going up after the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) gave its concessionaires the go-ahead to implement the second tranche of a scheduled seven-tariff adjustment schedule.

"We made sure the increase will be affordable," said MWSS Regulatory Office chief Marvin Dacano in a phone interview. "The overall impact is in which basically would just be around the cost of two text messages," Dacano said, or P2. Manila Water Ltd. Sen Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE). It would implement the new water rates on Feb. 15. Maynilad Water is not listed with the PSE but is expected to publish new rates as well. Nico T. Belmonte

US to give full honors to Fil-Am killed in blast

By Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

MANILA, Philippines—The US military is giving full honors to a Filipino-American soldier who was killed in a bomb attack by insurgents in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on Jan. 12.

The body of Sgt. Lutnell C. Cayanan, 28, of Tennessee, Arkansas, was brought to Dulles International Airport in Virginia on Monday by US government representatives and towed in exhibition.

Lorelie Dang Castleman, Cayanan's aunt, said she was renovating her body to her mother, Evelyn Dang Bacsan, who moved back to this town when she retired.

"I had a talk with Lutnell before the left for Afghanistan and I asked him if she had any special instructions for me in the event that something happened to her," Castleman said. "She replied, 'You can do whatever you want with my body.'"

"That's why I am bringing Lutnell's body back to Sagay. I will not take the amount away from my sister," Castleman said.

Cayanan, who was single, was assigned to the 212th MP Detachment Headquarters in Bagram Air Field in Parwan, Afghanistan, on Jan. 12.

She was deployed to Afghanistan on October last year upon completion of the Military Working Dog Handler Course at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, according to an article about Cayanan by her unit, printed for the memorial ceremony at Bagram.

Her dog, Rifa, was not injured in the bomb attack and will be returned to the unit.

Cayanan, a recipient of several medals for bravery and good conduct, will be posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Nato Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Interment has been scheduled for Thursday, at the Maria municipal cemetery.

SENIOR FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

DOLE stops retirements at PAL

By Philip C. Tubeza

SAYING IT should not "choose basis" the labor row at the country's flag carrier, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has ordered the management of Philippine Airlines (PAL) to stop retiring senior flight attendants who turn 55 years old.

In a letter dated Jan. 28, Labor Undersecretary Hans Leo De Cote told PAL and the Flight Attendants and Stewards Association of the Philippines (Fasap) to desist from taking actions that could worsen the dispute at the airline.

Cocote also ordered PAL to "suspend" its decision last month to retire eight senior flight attendants who had reached 55 "pending the final resolution of all motions relating to the case.

He reminded the company that in accordance with the status quo of Article/Inten Order issued by Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz on Oct. 6, 2010, both PAL and Fasap "are enjoined from continuing acts that may exacerbate the situation or give rise to further controversies issues or increase the tension between them."

Sillers standard by the hearings, PAL refrained from commenting about the latest DOLE order. It said it would issue a statement today.

PAL had defended the retirement of the flight patients, saying the Makati Negotiated Trial Court had already lifted the injunction it issued against their retirement.

But Bob Arabelo, Fasap president, said the lifting of the injunction did not give PAL the green light to retire the pursers since Baldoz was still reviewing her decision on the labor row.

In December last year, Baldoz ruled that the compulsory retirement age of FAD cabin crew should be 60 years old, but the airline opposed that ruling.

Fasap asked for DOLE's help after PAL management sent notices of retirement to the eight senior flight attendants on Jan. 13.

"We are glad that the Office of the DOLE Secretary heeded Fasap's urgent call to stop PAL from worsening the labor tension between PAL and Fasap," Arabelo said.

"PAL's move is suddenly to rile our members and the union by unfairly they started to cut, giving them only three days before being thrown out of their jobs was really very provocative and cruel," he added.

He said the DOLE reply to Fasap's urgent motion "should serve as a reminder to PAL that it is not above the law."

"We sincerely hope PAL management will reflect in contentive manner and respect the DOLE's decision. PAL and Fasap should start meeting in-formed relationship and work together for the good of the country's flag carrier," the association said.

TOURS DESTINATIONS
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• CUBA & Central America
• SCANDINAVIA & RUSSIA
• SOUTH AMERICA
• SCANDINAVIA & The Fjords
• AFRICA ADVENTURE

MEGAN MOTOR PHILIPPINES INC.

FVR: We were so busy fighting wars, quelling coups

By Khaila Pepe

FORMER President Fidel Ramos yesterday said that during his time, the military and police faced so many conflicts that they had no time to fulfill their mandate.

He said that when he was the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, the police and military had to fight off coup d'etats against reform, a communist insurgency and secessionists in Mindanao. "The police and military are still facing communist guerrillas and Moro secessionists."

Ramos served as the first AFP chief of staff during the administration of then President Corazon Aquino.

He acknowledged that the police and the military had outstanding issues.

"We had a contingency fund under the Armed Forces chief of staff which the control of the commander at each level. As you go down to the field, that fund becomes smaller. That is not 'loot' (stash-off money). That's for the police and soldiers," he said.

Ramos, who flew in the night to Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa, was meeting to celebrate the massive corruption in the AFP as revealed by a former military budget officer.

Ginoger Rabusa, a retired lieutenant colonel, said at a Senate hearing on Thursday that the military maintained a slush fund called the provision for unanticipated deferred activities (PUDA) that was distributed by the comptroller of the Department of the AFP chief of staff.

Rabusa, a military budget officer from 2000 to 2002, said it was from this unaudited slush fund that a retiring AFP chief of staff got a send-off gift—P50 million in the case of Angelo Reyes. It was also a source of funds for other officials.

Other beneficiaries of the slush fund were the AFP vice chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, the secretary of the joint staff, a senior military aide to the President, military auditor, liaison officers on legislative affairs, retired generals and even the defense press corps, Rabusa said.

He claimed that Reyes received some P180 million, including the "palaon" (send-off money), while he was the AFP chief of staff.

Rabusa said the practice of distributing payola to the military's brass was a "tradition" in the AFP.

Ramos said he was saddened by the controversies on the misuse of military funds.

The former President called on the Aquino administration to put a "closure" on the palaon controversy, or the practice of paying off retiring top brass in the military.

In a talk with reporters at the 20th Foundation Day of the Philippine National Police in Camp Crame, Ramos said local verdugo was the solution to the controversy.

"That must come to a closure. It's not in the books [that officers receive bonus] that will happen. It must happen in the leadership of the AFP starting with the commander in chief," said Ramos, also a former commander of the Philippine Constabulary, a precursor of the PNP.

He said the palaon system should be destroyed and replaced with "good leadership."

A good leader must "lead by example" by being a "family style" that is modest and narrow in cost.

"There were lots of temptations along the way. But if the leader is leading by example and [has] a modest lifestyle in accordance with the capacity/means of the people and rule of law, I think perseverance will be strengthened one," Ramos said.

Rabusa says another AFP boss got ₱160-M 'pabaon'

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SOLIDARITY BOOTS: Two soldiers who took part in the Oakwood mutiny in Makati City appear in a Senate hearing on an another coup attempt involving now self-styled general Antonio Trillanes in the field have complained of poor equipment amid charges that the military top brass are pocketing hundreds of millions of pesos in "send-off" money. (LEONARDO DAVID)

shed for this week.

In a TV interview, he said Mr. Ignacio and Climaco received more than P50 million in send-off money, but did not specify the figures. Villanueva was AFP chief of staff for 14 months from March 2001 to May 2002) and Climaco for just four months (from May 2002 to September 2002).

Standard practice

Rabusa, however, confirmed that like Angelo Reyes, the predecessors of Villanueva and Canlas, the generals were covered P1 million in monthly rice allowance, which Reyes did not necessarily pocket, as the amount was for office needs.

In the committee's inquiry into the plea bargain between government prosecutors and retired Major General Garcia on the latter's plunder case, Rabusa divulged the military practice of paying off the top brass.

Payola pot

Reyes got a payola pot, called pabaon in the command-directed scheme (PCDA), the payoffs were given on a monthly basis and upon their retirement to key officials, including himself, he said.

On top of the monthly P5 million, Reyes was gifted P50 million when he retired in March 2001 after just 20 months in office. Villanueva and Canlas had P30 million stay up final cash, according to Rabusa.

Rabusa said at the Senate hearings that most of those he had contacted about P1 billion for the payola pot declined/said.

Other beneficiaries

Others propagated beneficiaries of the fund were the OIC-Office of the AFP Vice Chief of Staff (P1.5 million plus P300,000 a month), deputy chief of staff (P1.5 million a month), and the secretary of the joint chiefs of staff (P1 million a month), according to former President Fidel Ramos' key confidante and former AFP comptroller and retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who is himself facing criminal charges.

Senator Estrada presented Rabusa as a rebel cohort, as a "surprise witness" at Thursday's hearing.

Demolition campaign

Reyes, in an interview with the Inquirer, said Estrada induced Rabusa to render false testimony in order to get back at him for his role in the 2001 ouster of then President Joseph Estrada.

"There is an ongoing demolition job, operation, to implicate me in the Garcia case," Reyes said.

"I would think it was an

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attempt to destroy people for political reasons," Reyes said. "We were undermined that I was one of the principal witnesses for Erap [Estrada]. Of course, they took it against me. They targeted Calida and Rabusa to make [his testimony] against me out of vengeance for what happened to Erap."

Any issues

In a statement distributed during the filing of his complaint at the Ombudsman, Reyes said he acted "according to the highest professional and ethical standards" during his term as chief of staff. "I have done nothing wrong and I categorically deny all the accusations of wrongdoing leveled against me."

In his complaint, Reyes said the "false, malicious and public" accusations had "caused dishonor, discredit and embarrassment to himself his family."

He said exposures "[f]ar willing to face any forum to answer all the charges and I'd meet them problems squarely."

Reyes' lawyer Rodolfo Jr. Aton Aton said Senator Estrada must be willing to get back at his rivals. He noted that the Senate hearing was supposed to center on the plea bargain in the Garcia case, but Estrada included Reyes in the picture "for many reasons."

"I'm not one remember Edsa II, one of the reasons why former President Estrada was removed from office was Angelo Reyes. It's up to you to figure out why [Senator Estrada] is doing this," Aton Aton said.

Why now?

Abraham said Garcia did not serve as respondent when Reyes was chief of staff. He also wondered why accusations were being leaked against Reyes now.

"They didn't file charges against him in the past, or why are they speaking out now when Reyes is no longer in service? He cannot defend himself before the Senate. Reyes not even allowed to speak," the lawyer said.

Abraham said Rabusa was only speaking out because he wanted to apply as a state witness in order to escape the detriment of the cases against him.

"He is not a credible witness," said Estrada said. Rabusa violated the antigraft law, which penalizes any public official who causes undue injury to any party in the discharge of his official functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence.

"The fact that the bargaining fails and defamatory accusations were done during the hearing at the Senate blue ribbon committee by Senator President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada and his supreme senses," individually demonstrate their manifest partiality, evident bad faith, and gross inexcusable negligence," Reyes said.

'Something I had to do'

Reyes said Rabusa had been charged with perjury and unlawfully amassing wealth way beyond his legitimate income.

In his statement, Reyes also said he had filed the complaint "to seek justice and redress of my grievances," and that his family had suffered from the case by public ridicule that was orchestrated by Rabusa and his cohorts.

Retiring to his 2001 defection from the Estrada administration, Reyes said, "It's something I've always said I never wanted to do but something which I had to do."

Riding on the issue

Both Rabusa and Rabusa dropped off the complaint filed by Reyes at the Ombudsman, saying he had the right to do this and that they would assess this to the proper time.

Details your reporters a glimpse of his statement at the committee hearing on Jan. 27 when he disclosed that he had acquisitions showing net worth of P50 with. Tweedie and Lagos's wife. Estrada made speeches aimed at ousting military funds.

DND panel ordered to identify officials in AFP slush fund scam

By Dona Pazzibugan
and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A FOUR-MEMBER special panel of the Department of National Defense (DND) has been ordered by the defense secretary to determine the officials who should be held liable for the alleged diversion of military funds into the personal slush fund of past military chiefs.

The panel headed by lawyer Ricardo Tuble, chief of the DND Office of Legal Affairs, was given 30 days to submit the end of February to come up with its findings and recommendations on the illegal acts stored by a former military budget officer, retired Lt. Col. George Rabusa.

Fernando Rhondel, assistant secretary for requirements, was appointed vice chair. Members of the committee are Willie Delegal, assistant secretary for plans and programs, and retired Brig. Gen. Romeo de Leon, prosecutor of the National Defense College of the Philippines.

It was assigned to investigate not only the claims made by Rabusa at the Senate hearing on Jan. 27 but also anomalies committed by the retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia when he was chief of military comptroller from 2001 to 2004.

Gazewin order

The DND panel, created by an order issued on Jan. 28 by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, would also determine the liability of "any military and civilian officials and employees" in the financial irregularities.

The order said the panel would examine "the weaknesses of the AFP budget and financial controls... the conversion of AFP funds for other purposes or uses, the conversion of AFP funds into foreign currency and the conversion of AFP funds to circumvent the anti-money laundering law."

Budget

The panel was given the authority to require any defense and military officials to attend the hearings. It was given a P200,000 operational budget and the assistance of the Office of the AFP Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (J1) as secretariat.

In the House of Representatives, the committee on justice has invited the 11 generals who served as Armed Forces chiefs of staff under the Arroyo administration.

"We want to know from these officers when the bookkeeping of pabaon system started," said Mandaluyong Rep. Rodolfo Biazon who recommended to the committee chair, Iloilo Rep. Neil Tupas Jr., to invite Arroyo's generals.

Biazon himself is a former Armed Forces chief of staff. He served under the Aquino administration. He has a house in the upscale Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa.

The retired generals invited to the hearing were Angelo Reyes, Hermogenes Esperon, Generoso Senga, Narciso Abaya, Efraim Tutay, Alexander Yano, Victor Ibrado and Delfin Bangit.

Reyes hits back, sues Rabusa, Jinggoy Estrada

From page A1

million assembly take during his term as chief of staff.

Rabusa made the claim on Thursday during a Senate hearing on the unresolved plea bargain between the state prosecutors and former AFP comptroller and retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who is himself facing criminal charges.

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"I'm not one remember Edsa II, one of the reasons why former President Estrada was removed from office was Angelo Reyes. It's up to you to figure out why [Senator Estrada] is doing this," Aton Aton said.

Why now?

Abraham said Garcia did not serve as respondent when Reyes was chief of staff. He also wondered why accusations were being leaked against Reyes now.

"They didn't file charges against him in the past, or why are they speaking out now when Reyes is no longer in service? He cannot defend himself before the Senate. Reyes not even allowed to speak," the lawyer said.

Abraham said Rabusa was only speaking out because he wanted to apply as a state witness in order to escape the detriment of the cases against him.

"He is not a credible witness," said Estrada said. Rabusa violated the antigraft law, which penalizes any public official who causes undue injury to any party in the discharge of his official functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence.

"The fact that the bargaining fails and defamatory accusations were done during the hearing at the Senate blue ribbon committee by Senator President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada and his supreme senses," individually demonstrate their manifest partiality, evident bad faith, and gross inexcusable negligence," Reyes said.

'Something I had to do'

Reyes said Rabusa had been charged with perjury and unlawfully amassing wealth way beyond his legitimate income.

In his statement, Reyes also said he had filed the complaint "to seek justice and redress of my grievances," and that his family had suffered from the case by public ridicule that was orchestrated by Rabusa and his cohorts.

Retiring to his 2001 defection from the Estrada administration, Reyes said, "It's something I've always said I never wanted to do but something which I had to do."

Riding on the issue

Both Rabusa and Rabusa dropped off the complaint filed by Reyes at the Ombudsman, saying he had the right to do this and that they would assess this to the proper time.

Details your reporters a glimpse of his statement at the committee hearing on Jan. 27 when he disclosed that he had acquisitions showing net worth of P50 with. Tweedie and Lagos's wife. Estrada made speeches aimed at ousting military funds.

Dante Jimenez throws self at mercy of SC

By Nikko Dizon

ANTICIPATED remarks from former solicitor general Jose Melo, who is also a member of the Supreme Court's rules committee, failed to materialize as Dante Jimenez, president of Philippine Constitution Association (Philconsa), threw himself at the mercy of the high court.

Jimenez, who is also a former Commission on Elections (Comelec) chairman, asked the high court to allow him to withdraw his petition questioning the constitutionality of Republic Act 9369, or the Automated Election System Law.

Jimenez's petition was filed in behalf of Philconsa.

Jimenez explained that he was withdrawing the petition because he was convinced by the arguments raised by Comelec in its comment filed before the high court.

Jimenez said he was also

EU urges Egypt: Seek peaceful shift to democracy

BRUSSELS—Egypt needs a peaceful transition to democracy, European Union (EU) foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton said on Monday, warning the country's civilian life be on guard against a takeover by religious militants.

"I do not see Egyptians will let us or anybody else dictate democracy and civil rights, not extremists, not radicalism," Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said.

Frattini spoke ahead of the monthly meeting of EU foreign ministers, where the situation in Egypt and Tunisia will top the agenda.

The European Union has traditionally had particularly close relations with both countries as part of its partnerships with countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

But in recent days, the 27-nation bloc has been working to distance itself from the regime of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Still, it has been criticized for its reluctance to criticize Mubarak directly and has been waiting for the United States to take the lead.

On Sunday, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton appealed for an orderly transition to lasting democracy in Egypt and refused to speculate on the future of the 82-year-old Mubarak or his increasingly unpopular government.

Also on Sunday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told Mubarak in a phone call that she expects him and his newly reformed government to grant freedom of information and the right to assemble.

She urged Mubarak in a lengthy conversation to open dialogue with the country's citizens and focus on particular on the economy of Egypt's youth. She also told him that recently harsh force to avoid further violence against protesters, according to a German government spokesperson.

Initial reactions in Europe and elsewhere stressed the right of Egyptians to assemble and supported calls for reform.

Asia more cautious

Leaders in Asia were more cautious.

China's foreign ministry said Beijing hoped economic and stability would be restored in Egypt soon. The Japanese and Indian foreign ministries issued similar statements.

"We hope that the government of Egypt will listen to the voices of many citizens, promote reforms in a way that pays support of a wide range of people and realize its stability and progress," the Japanese government said.

Arriving for the EU ministers' meeting on Monday, Andreas Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger said that nations were also concerned about the possible way to power of extremists, adding "we don't want that."

"The challenges that Egypt is facing are daunting," said the Swedish country's prime minister, Carl Bildt, adding that it was of critical importance that Egypt's elections this year be free and fair.

Ministers were also expected to discuss whether to start extending the lists of thousands of EU citizens currently in Egypt. Most of those are tourists who flock to Egypt during the winter.

EU nations have refrained from calling on their citizens to leave the country, saying that so far there have been no problems, according to EU citizens in Egypt. But other countries, including the United States, have urged that their citizens leave Egypt as soon as possible. AP

STONED INIT Egyptian Army soldier rides position in front of the Giza pyramids in Cairo on Monday as protesters called for an end to Mubarak's rule in Egypt signing the stakes in their bid to topple President Hosni Mubarak's regime. AP

Egypt opposition calls for 1 million on streets

From page A1

ed point of calls for the ouster of Mubarak, whom they blame for widespread poverty, joblessness and official indifference and frankly during for 30 years in power.

Thousands of people had gathered since the square by early morning. Many slept arrested on the grass or in colorful tents. Others were filtering into the square in the early morning.

ElBaradei

The powerful Muslim Brotherhood said the secular opposition banded together on Sunday created a provisional government under which to organize free elections, ending the fall of Mubarak, as the army struggled to hold a capital seized by fears of chaos and buoyed by euphoria that three decades of Mubarak's rule may be coming to an end.

The opposition announced that the exile Mohamed ElBaradei would represent a loosely unified opposition coalition in the struggle between Mubarak's government and it, a day old uprising bent on destruction and security from power.

Though not a leading opposition figure on his own, ElBaradei, a Nobel laureate and diplomat, could serve as a consensus figure for a movement that has struggled to articulate a program for a peaceful transition.

Supporters of ElBaradei suggested, too, that the opposition was aware of the uprising's magic abroad, putting forth a candidate who might be more acceptable to the West than tainted in Egypt.

In some countries, as in any crisis the uprising began, ElBaradei rallied a government earlier and joined thousands of protesters in Liberation Square, a downtown landmark that has become the center of the uprising and a platform, will small, for the frustrations, ambitions and enraged pride of a generation storming the country's streets.

"Today we are proud of Egyptians," ElBaradei told throngs who surged toward him in a square festooned with banners calling for freedom and justice. "We have restored our rights, restored our freedom and what have begun cannot be reversed."

'It's now or a'

ElBaradei declared it a "new era," and as night fell there were few in Egypt who seemed to disagree.

ElBaradei also criticized the Obama administration, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated the crowds on the first day were progressive in thinking ties with the message that Mubarak should name an "orderly transition" to ensure politically open Egypt, while the statement been calling on him to leave.

But Obama appeared to Saturday said, was "a limited policy" that was eroding American credibility. "It's better for President Obama and to appear that he is the last one to say to President Mubarak, it's time for you to go," ElBaradei said.

The danger to Sunday appeared to have two

NEW LEADER Egyptian opposition leader Mohamed ElBaradei speaks to protesters in Liberation Square on Sunday. ElBaradei told thousands of protesters that an uprising against Hosni Mubarak's rule "cannot go back." REUTERS

HOW LISTENING? US President Barack Obama talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the White House in Washington on the Aug. 18, 2009, file photo. Obama on Sunday urged an "orderly transition" to democracy in Egypt, stopping short of calling on Mubarak to step down but signaling that his days may be numbered. REUTERS

deepening narratives: a vision of anarchy offered by the government, and echoed by Egyptians fearing chaos, against the perspective of protesters and many others that the uprising had become what they called, "regime overthrow."

The military, Egypt's most powerful institution and one embedded deeply in all aspects of life here, reinforced parts of the capital on Sunday. It gathered in strength to 300 tanks and armored carriers at the headquarters of the Defense to Soldiers the area of President Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1981, which brought Mubarak to power.

Daily humiliations

The military ministry announced it would again deploy over-the-air from Cairo and Alexandria.

"We're worried about the chaos, now," said Selma el-Tatli, 35, a film director who had joined friends in Liberation Square. "But everyone is aware the choice is presented by the government. The revolution is not going to this chaos."

Still, driven by many instances of looting—and rumors that rattled across Cairo, fed by Egyptian television's unrelenting coverage of lawlessness—it was clear that many feared the unrest could worsen, and might eventually dominate the protesters' demands.

"At first the words were right," said Abu Sayed el-Sayed, a driver. "But protests were peaceful—freedom, jobs and all that. But then the looting came and the thugs and thieves rode in. Someone has to stop it, before there's nothing left to stop into."

Mantra of resurgence

For a government that long celebrated the mantra of Arab resurgence—economic and security—Mubarak and his officials seemed to stumble in formulating a response to the most serious challenge to his rule.

Mubarak appeared on state television on Sunday in a meeting with military chiefs in what was portrayed as business as usual. Through the day, the nation found itself plunged deeply from its online other outlets.

"Behind you are 80 million people, saying yes to Mubarak!" one declared.

That was the cause of consternation across Cairo, though, in angry pores at what residents described as scripted television and lament on the part of a reeling state.

For two days, clashes raged at Abu Zaabal, the prison south of Cairo, that officials said the police had killed at least 13 inmates there before abandoning it.

On Sunday, scores of people passed in and out of the violence-ridden entrance, hunting food and looking through a black mass grave. Two were bullet-riddled bodies, but the food to intervene to the mayhem.

The Muslim Brotherhood said 34 of its members walked out of Wadi Natrun in the road to Alexandria, after guards abandoned their posts. All of the men had been arrested before during Friday the biggest day of the protests.

"The prisoners themselves freed us from the gang who killed our, the government that has become a gang," said Hosam al-Hyna, one of the Brotherhood's leaders, who had been among those held.

Old, young unite

Since the uprising began last week, the Brotherhood has taken a cool to the protests but clued away from a leadership role, though that appeared to change on Sunday.

Mohamed el-Beltagui, a key Brotherhood leader and former Parliament member, said in effect of the protest's more youthful leaders and other opposition figures had met again in an attempt to assemble a more unified front with a joint consultation.

The committee included ElBaradei, along with other prominent figures like Ayman Nour and Amani al-Ghazali Badr, who have struggled to build a popular following.

By far, the Brotherhood represents the most powerful force, but Beltagui said another Brotherhood official, Mohamed el-Katatni, said the group understood the implications of seeking leadership in a country still deeply divided over its religious program.

"We're supporting ElBaradei to lead the path to change," Beltagui said in an armed tent in Liberation Square. "The Brotherhood wishes to have its members, especially in the West, towards the liberalism, and we're not keen to be at the forefront."

"We're trying to build a democratic arena before we start playing in it," he said.

Elsewhere, ElBaradei encouraged that consensus figure remained unclear. He was the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 for his work as director of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mixed reaction

Even in Liberation Square, the crowd's reaction to ElBaradei was mixed—some were sympathetic but many more were unmoved. He has stayed for a man who spent much of his adult life abroad.

The Brotherhood supports Mohammed Fayed, an engineer, and that even if ElBaradei could replace Mubarak, he should stay no longer than a year. "ElBaradei doesn't live here and doesn't know us. We need a leader who can understand Egyptians."

Whatever ElBaradei's success, the Arab, long an institution shielded from criticism in the state media, was clearly still the bellwether of events here, with a growing recognition that it would probably play the pivotal role in shaping the nation's government and in deciding who rules next.

In a show of authority, Mubarak was shown meeting with Defense Minister Mohammed Tantawi and Omar Suleiman, his right-hand man, who was appointed vice president on Saturday to oversee and reform, promising reconvened the military one, in a bid to restore to their role.

Helicopters, jets

Military helicopters flew over the capital, circling Liberation Square through the day, and the roofs of jets soared across a low ultrasonic din.

Though the army took no steps against the protesters, who showed in the helicopters passed overhead, in the air, an international scene, some of them killed a captain in uniform on their shoulders, marching him through a square suffused with disbelief, tears and outbursts that not in years, Egypt's entrenched lines of class and religious divisions.

In contrast to the anxiety and apprehension elsewhere in Cairo, a carnival atmosphere prevailed in Liberation Square, where residents offered Egyptian dishes as discussion points and protesters posed for pictures in front of tanks covered with slogans like, "30 years of humiliation and poverty."

"The people and the Army are one hand!" they shouted.

Across the capital, youths and some elders were guarded their own neighborhoods, sometimes pressing themselves at each block and alley, bowed and they were not wanting to fight each other, as well as with each other, and many residents expressed pride in the success that they had in securing their property from the thieves of looters and thieves.

The residents celebrated what they said was a peaceful Bastille Day in Cairo that Egyptians again were taking control of their destiny.

"We know each other, we stood by each other and people respect what we're doing," said Ahmed Ibrahim, a night watchman who was part of the self-defense group in the posh neighborhood of Heliopolis. "This is the Egyptian people. We need to be one hand."

He said about 60 residents from each building, 400 in all, were keeping watch. Residents had passed the barricades and stood entrances. They were helped by a few commands from dissident army of police officers. "The good ones," he said. Reports from AP and New York Times News Service

SHOES OF DEATH Three women flash victory signs as they attend a demonstration in Cairo on Sunday. Mourners before the start of a fiery, curfew, at least two were opposed and crowds multiplied across new downtown, including the central square where thousands of protesters were calling for the departure of President Hosni Mubarak. AP

AN EGYPTIAN An army soldier gestures as he stands atop a tank in Cairo on Sunday. REUTERS

PH economy grows at fastest pace in 24 years

From page B1

ally adjusted 3.0 percent in the final quarter of 2010, more than double earlier expectations and a turnaround of a third-quarter contraction.

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) said the strong performance of the Philippine economy—coming off growth of just 0.9 percent in 2009—was bolstered on the back of the world recovery from the global financial crisis.

"The global economic recovery which resulted in record growth rates of foreign trade ... contributed to the strong performance in 2010 that will surpassed the government's target of 5.0 percent to 6.0 percent," the NSCB said.

Most breathing growth were higher remittances from the millions of Filipinos working abroad, and the robust money that is pumped into the economy by public-sector officials campaigned in the national and local elections held in the middle of last year.

"Remittances have been pretty healthy and that has really helped to support private consumption in the Philippines," said BDRC economists Sherwin Chan, Benedicto Yu-it Ong and Jonathan Ravelas Jr. in a note to investors. Philippine dollars are expected to top $20 billion this year.

The NSCB said industry delivered its best seasonally adjusted quarterly growth in at least 15 years, rising 6.7 percent in October to December from the previous three months, with food manufacturers and transport leading the way.

"This shows the economy is moving in sync. That is a large part due to accommodative monetary policy which has helped to sustain investments even though the government is pursuing fiscal consolidation," Chan said.

Strong growth from industry and services in the fourth quarter more than offset falling government spending, which fell an estimated 1.6 percent in the quarter.

NSCB Secretary General Romulo Virola said the 7.3-percent full-year GDP expansion was the highest since 1976, when the dictator Ferdinand Marcos was toppled in the Edsa Revolution.

Growth by sector

Private sector investment in construction, machinery and equipment received an [illegible] IT-process growth in gross domestic capital formation. This supported the healthy pace of growth in manufacturing and services, according to the NSCB.

Industry contributed 3.0 percentage points to total GDP growth on the back of brisk manufacturing, particularly electrical machinery, petroleum and coal products, and food—thanks to a sweet pick-up in consumer demand and the rebound in external trade.

The services sector contributed 3.8 percentage points to GDP growth, boosted by the strong performance of trade and private services. This was complemented by [illegible] domestic investment, robust expansion in business process outsourcing, hotels and restaurants, wholesale and retail trade, and import and export trade.

Due to fewer typhoons, the agriculture sector managed to grow 0.4 percent in the fourth quarter. "Only two typhoons hit the country compared to seven in the last quarter of 2009," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Cayetano Paderanga noted.

Nonetheless, full-year growth in agriculture, fishery and forestry was subdued due to the lingering effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon in the first half of 2010.

Inflation, interest rates

Robust domestic demand, and rising global food and fuel prices, however, are adding to concerns about inflation.

"We were expecting the central bank to take steps by the second quarter. But given these strong growth numbers, I think there's scope for the central bank to normalize its monetary policy as early as the first quarter," said Isabel Mercedes, an economist at Nomura in Singapore.

The Philippines is one of only two countries in Southeast Asia—the other is Indonesia—not to have raised interest rates since the end of the global financial crisis. The policy rate has been at a record low of 4 percent since July 2009.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), however, is not [illegible] unresponsive.

"Not necessarily inflationary because the economy has expanded, its absorptive capacity has grown," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said in his message to reporters.

Inflation is expected to rise up to the third quarter before stabilizing toward 2012, the BSP said in its [illegible] inflation "into 3.0 percent in November and December, after hitting a ten-year low of 2.8 percent in October.

Exciting prospects

"We are looking toward exciting growth prospects," Guinigundo said.

Likewise listening with optimism, Bautista said "the 2010 economic performance bolsters confidence that the economy is on a path of strong recovery."

Asian Development Bank chief economist Cyrille Philippines School of Economics agreed that the rate of economic expansion in 2010 could provide momentum for future growth. But he added the challenges were many.

"Government has to raise revenue to sustain support for infrastructure development, investment in the social sector, particularly education and health, and to alleviate poverty," Balboa said.

John Forbes, an investment advisor with the local American Chamber of Commerce, said the promise of fuel has political stability during President Aquino's six-year term offered hope for a sustained period of strong growth.

Ida Cloud Mc Aguiler's [illegible] spices company, social welfare spending and mobile-box-dollar infrastructure projects about investors the Philippines could finally start to match by fast-rival Asian neighbors.

"The Philippines is an economy in the world's fastest-growing region and it is surrounded by economies that have grown at very high rates for a very long period of time," Forbes said.

He said average GDP growth for the Philippines had been below 5.0 percent for the past decades.

"What this figure [2010 GDP growth] demonstrates is the potential of the Philippine economy to grow almost twice as fast (as it's grown)," he said. With reports from AFP and Reuters

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Oprah advises Charice

From page B1

"I agree with her because I myself cannot ready for that. In Mariah's case, I myself a baby," Charice told journalists on Sunday morning. She had just flown in from Los Angeles, California, to do a Valentine special for GMA.

Her crush: JT

The petite Pinay admitted she did have a crush on Justin Timberlake, whom she met in 2008. "I sang for him at an event and my knees were started shaking when he smiled at me. I nearly began the lyrics," she recalled, laughing.

But has the ever-bitter in love? "That is my guy who is not knowing ... he don't always it," she replied, adding that her mom has ever allowed her to entertain suitors.

Charice pointed out that Whitney—who topped the list of judges screening her for French Stephens and pre—plays a big role in her [illegible] decisions. "My friends is part of the Charice team. We work her permission for every project that I do. Also, Whitney. When I went to a number of websites, including some movie projects, there were a few of them that Ms Oprah didn't like. She's very strict. She doesn't like having a mess."

One phone call

It was initially [illegible] Ellen DeGeneres who gave Charice her break on American television by inviting her to guest on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" on Dec. 19, 2007. Winfrey took the stage under her wing the following year, after Charice made a series of guest spots on "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

A powerful and influential media mogul named Winfrey singled out as the richest African-American of the 20th century. Winfrey made one phone call to noted producer songwriter David Foster and asked what he could do for Charice. Foster responded by putting Charice on his concert tour lineup. Then he signed her to a record deal with Universal.

Foster likewise tapped his friend Josh Groban's manager, Mike Johnston, to handle Charice's international business deals.

The last time she performed in Manila, on Jan. 8, before an estimated crowd of 70,000 at the SM Mall of Asia open grounds, an audience of [illegible] friends—loved ones who were stalled. Injustice who had regularly received her earbuds and encouragements wondered why, suddenly she had not many lively friends and couldn't give interviews.

"My EI management is super-strict and I just follow," Charice explained on Sunday. "I always tell them that, in our culture it's very important for an artist to be in video, very much, especially by media and the fans. He doesn't fully agree, he's reasoned about it usually."

Oversized sponsor

As for other controversies—for instance, a tabloid columnist wrote that her new signature look with oversized eyeglasses as a recurring character on the hit US TV sitcom "Glee" didn't quite fit her—Charice said: "I don't take negative comments badly. That's an opinion, and I consider it as an advice."

She recalled that she used packing on the glasses while preparing for her role as exchange student Suzie Simon Cowsen in "Glee." She was afraid the producers wouldn't like it, she recounted. "But they did. I actually told them that I had worn [illegible] glasses as a student in the Philippines."

Going Valentines, she said, was a personal choice. Besides is not opposing it. "How I wish!" Guiano quipped.

The object of a busy schedule requires Charice to [illegible] many dances. "Lots [illegible] and to find [illegible]," she disclosed.

She has also started a training program to no. LA gym. "My trainer wants me to develop my abs. The thing I have to do is [illegible] because I'm quite heavy," she complained.

But, she noted, those could also prepare her for a time night concert series in Japan from Feb. 19-25. "My opponent has many dances songs ... Beyonce times ... I really get tired when dancing while singing," she said.

Rich kid

Asked how it felt to be ranked among the Top 5 richest Filipinos who have made it in the international scene, Charice said: "I don't know that I'm rich. I'm able to provide for my family. I bought my mom a house, and my brother, a car. At first rate, I'm happy that I can buy all the gadgets that I want."

The tabloid columnist-turned-scriptwriter [illegible] Charice's current wealth at $1.2 million.

She recently bought a Blackberry Torch and an iPhone G4, she said, adding, "I also collect [illegible] watches. What I mean to buy next is even."

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Center for Continuing Education

Rep. Singson pleads guilty to drugs raps

From page 1

the evening's defense as well. Making arguments of selective the drugs are immoral for you, and that we be safe as families.

The 42-year-old legislator was arrested in Hong Kong in international airport by customs officers on July 13, 2012. He admitted to bringing 6.47 grams of cocaine and was taken of the materials by... transport into the city. The cocaine was hidden in his underpants.

The total value of the cocaine was about $2,000.

Singson pleaded for leniency apologizing to the judge and the people of Hong Kong.

The sentencing hearing was set to continue on Tuesday.

Singson is the son of late 'Chavit' Singson, governor of Ilocos Sur in the Philippines whose testimony in the corruption trial of his former friend, ex-President Joseph Estrada, helped convict the second local, or in 2001 and arrest a life prison term. Estrada was later pardoned.

Singson said his next course as and all since 2006, and she acknowledged safety net, placements in his 20s.

Quarrels rich girlfriend

Singson said he was on a recreational gambling binge when arresting on Ukiwo reserve in Manila for helped stage last July 6, financed by an argument with his girlfriend. He drew the child to join a friend arresting a police reconnaissance in Ilocos and was arrested while transferring through Hong Kong.

Singson, who is an Ivel, added he was not engaging substitution since for his drug addiction.

The lawmaker, a music producer whose business interests include the music station Classic 97 in the Philippines, denied any plan to resell the drugs.

"They were solely for his own consumption. He had no intention of engaging in commercial or social trafficking," Singson's lawyer John Keating told Judge Joseph Fee.

Scottad daily

Singson said he had the drugs because of "political pressures," "pressure of (Ukiwo) business, or" and relationship problems adding that he was suffering from depression.

"Even though I was successful in my own right, I didn't feel happy," he said.

He testified that he entered casino daily consuming between seven hours and five grams a day causing him as much as $20,000 in several months being bringer starting in 2006.

"When we (went) to (casinos), I took large amounts for, generally every day," he told the court.

Big mistake

"I apologize to the people of Hong Kong," Singson said. "This was a very big mistake and in the process, I have caused my name and reputation, embarrassing my family and causing pain to my girlfriend."

Singson added: "I've never been more remorseful in my life. This is just the beginning of my problems. But knowing my base hearts home has cause me a great deal of pain."

"I ask you to find it in your heart to... ameliorate my wish to... anyway. There's nothing more I want than to go on with my life," he said.

You are convicted on your own plea and admission of the facts," Hong Kong Judge Joseph Fee told Singson in a packed courtroom.

A delay?

Last week the original trial judge recused himself from the case after receiving a letter he said contained "unjustified allegations" against the lawmaker and called for the case to be reassigned.

Singson, together with prosecutor Ng Cli Stephen and Ilocos native, the Philippines with holding a parliamentary crisis.

He was a second-term representative in the House of Representatives, native in May in the seat long held by his family.

The 68-year-old Chavit Singson remains a close ally of Singson arrested claims his son was drug dealer. "It's a crime," he told reporters in Singson when he was in Hong Kong to attend his court trial hearing.

Tested negative

"He is so good," the elder Singson said in a phone interview from Hong Kong, referring to the young lawmaker.

"The problem is he (Ronald) had issued negative for drug use," Chavit Singson said. "But someone gave that to him to make the judge has no choice but to change him with trafficking in court. If he would use to his him, still does he would sell to his son?"

Governor Singson said he was hoping his son would convince the judge that she cannot was for his own use and he would be charged only with possession. He said the penalty for this was deportation.

But if the judge rejected his claim that he was a user, Singson said that his son could appeal a long-term jail for trial.

No room in Congress

While Governor Singson has asked Ilocanderos to wait for the conclusion of his son's case before acting on calls for his removal from the House of Representatives, Deputy Minority Leader and Zambales Rep. Mitos Magsaysay said that letting a confirmed drug user was enough for the House to expel him.

"I will maintain my position that any one who violates the law has no place in Congress. Though he is not guilty in our own country or legislature, definitely as and moral values should be under land somewhere can be public servant," Magsaysay said.

The urged Congressman Singson to resign or else things go through a "kicking" especially if you was which would need now. details of the House's 230 members to be convicted.

The chair of the committee on justice, Umbo Rep. Neil Tupas, said the House should immediately start the ethics probe on Singson considering the damage the drug bust has done to the House's reputation.

Albayan Rep. Walden Bello said: "I think this is a blot on the reputation of the House. I feel Representative Singson should resign. Instead of putting the House through the painful process of prosecuting and throwing him out on ethics charges. His living an empty shame and personable ridicule with light violations is unfair as well." *Reports from AP and INQ, Catherine Jay Ar*

Gov't OKs ₱1 hike for jeepney ride

From page 1

and economy.

The jeepney fare increase is the latest in a series of transportation-related price increases which have been approved since the start of the year.

On New Year's Day, increases in toll rates at the North Luzon Expressway, Subic-Clark Tarlac Expressway and Clark-Luzon Expressway were implemented by the roads' respective operators.

Taxi fares went up on Jan. 16 by a total of 31 percent. Fares for the Light Rail Transit and Metro Rail Transit lines in Metro Manila are also approved to go up. Fare hikes are also awaiting their revisions.

The LTFRB said it had approved the increase from the minimum fare of ₱9 to help jeepney operators and drivers cope with rising commodity prices.

Rising prices

"The provisional increase was granted because the board took pitiful notice that the prices of goods have been going up, as well as the cost of maintaining jeepney operations, affecting the livelihood of operators," LTFRB Board Member Manuel Bonganay said in an interview.

While the interest of the public is still the main concern, we must also protect the rights of the jeepney operators, who are owning vital industries," Bonganay said.

The provisional increase is still below P8.12, which was the one approved by the LTFRB in July 2008. Jeepney operators voluntarily implemented a discounted rate of ₱7 in February 2009 but, fearing a sharp drop in their prices, Bonganay said this provisional increase is not enough.

Bonganay said the LTFRB board members will conduct ocular inspections in the provinces to see the actual situation of jeepney operators and drivers before approving the petitions.

The decision was made during a meeting between jeepney operators' groups, including Nancy Manila and the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines.

The militant Pagkakaisa ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) also supported the petitions for a fare increase but still recommends a round-table discussion to avoid problems, pages for hard.

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Low-pressure area to bring heavy rains, says Pagasa

A LOW-PRESSURE area (LPA) sighted 200 kilometers east of Mindanao is expected to bring heavy rains to Visayas and Mindanao, the state-run Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said on Monday.

Rainfall level, Pagasa chief forecaster said the rains would be due to the LPA, most of which is over Mindanao and in the eastern part of the Visayas in the next three to four days.

Rainfall level, however, said the LPA would not likely develop into a tropical cyclone.

The rains, coupled by the northeast monsoon, will be unusually heavy and may bring flash floods and landslides, especially in eastern Mindanao.

On Monday the agency's deputy administrator Nathaniel Servando said the rains over the past weekend, affecting Cotabato City, Tawi-Tawi, also had been acting administrator since August when Renato Solidum was relieved over an inconsistent typhoon forecast in July last year.

Tawi-Tawi forecaster Ricardo Jr. Jr. Science and Technology Cristina L. Libiran

THE DAILY GOSPEL

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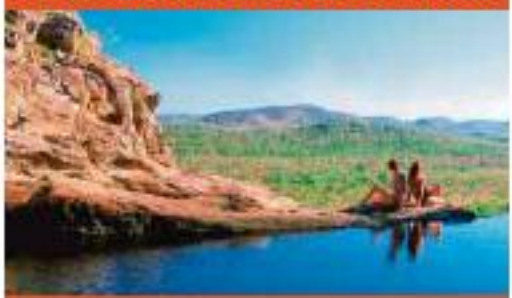

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OPINION

Humanizing the Bible

LAST WEEK the 2nd St. Paul National Bible Quiz was launched and opened to both Catholics and Protestants. Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, speaking at the launching, said, "The Bible does not only teach the truth about religion, about life, but it is a way of cleansing ourselves of biases, prejudices, sometimes even anger. It can defuse these things."

EDITORIAL The Bible is often referred to as the Holy Scriptures, and being holy, it is often thought to be beyond the reach and understanding of the ordinary man. Indeed, there was a time when Catholics had to obtain permission to read the Bible. But now it is presumed that a copy of the Bible is in every Christian home and that it is often read and consulted for valuable advice. But is it? It would seem that it is not so widely read even in a supposedly Christian country like the Philippines. For instance, on the recent Christmas program of a newspaper, at the "give me" segment of the program, no one could immediately present a copy of the Bible. An employee was able to present one after several minutes, but he was late because he had recently rearranged the bookcase in his office.

The Bible is a living, pulsating book that needs to be "humanized." It should be considered a friend, an advisor, a teacher, a guide whose advice is needed for daily living. It is perhaps one of the best and greatest books, or more precisely, collection of books, ever written. The Bible is theology, a set of moral and ethical rules, history and literature.

As theology it contains the sacred writings of the Jewish and Christian religions. John Howard Yoder, professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, likens the Bible to the ground floor of a building. We said that "It is the ground floor that one has to go through to get to the stairs that would lead to the other floors." Rosales said the central point of the Bible is Jesus, and indeed from the Christian point of view the Bible is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The Bible is a guide for moral and ethical behavior. The most important rules are contained in the Ten Commandments which are supposed to be followed by every good Christian. Carolyn Oehler, a religious writer, said that the Bible "provides human beings as moral agents who have a responsibility for themselves and their world." But it's a supposedly Christian country like the Philippines, the Ten Commandments are more honored in the breach than the observance. "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery" are just two of the commandments that are often violated by both those in high and low places in society and government.

The Bible stands on less solid grounds as history. Writer Baxter Nicholls notes, for instance, that archaeology has turned up no physical remains to support the Bible's story of the Exodus: "There is no evidence for the wanderings of the Israelites in the Sinai desert." A group of scholars argues that biblical accounts of early Israel, including the stories of David and Solomon, have little, if any basis, in history. But archaeology is also adding to the biblical narrative. For instance, in 1993, a stele referring to the "House of David," the first real evidence that refers to the biblical king, was unearthed.

But it is as literature that the Bible (particularly the King James version) has had the greatest impact and influence on writers, poets, artists and intellectuals in general. Who can forget such lines as "Bless me with fingers, caution me with apples," "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt return," "a land flowing with milk and honey," "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" and "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

The Bible covers more than a hundred literary genres, including chronicle, proverb, maxim, psalm, oracle, apocalypse, parable, song, epistle, hero story, gospel, epic, tragedy, comedy, parable, lyric, nature poem, drama, cursing dramatic monologue, chorus song and love poem.

It is good that the St. Paul National Bible Quiz is being conducted and is open to both Catholics and Protestants. It should help promote the widespread reading of the Bible. It should help harmonize and popularize the Bible. The Bible is a book not only for all times, but also for our times, when public morals, ethics and conduct have fallen to a new low and when people are often at a loss at whom or to whom to turn for guidance.

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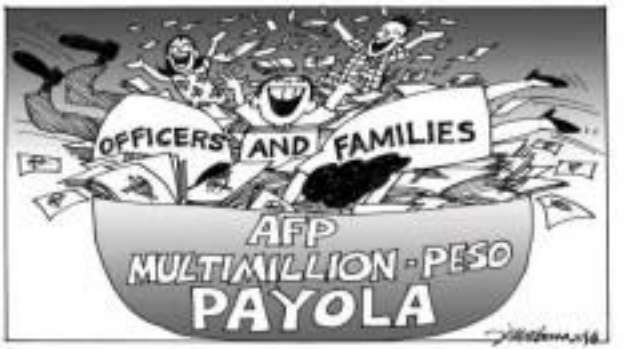


A step sidewards

VIEWPOINT

Janet L. Mercado

"THE DIFFERENCE between a hero and zero is a step sidewards," we are told.

State auditor Heidi Mendoza refused to disable sidewards. She had received a Commission on Audit letter copy-furnished though Armed Forces comptroller records, only to be told to look off the desk.

"Circumstance never made a hero," Blessed John Henry Newman wrote. Mendoza didn't create the case. She resigned from the COA, which let Senate Blue Ribbon committee head Senator Panfilo Lacson's case. He had Mendoza audit AFP comptroller Carlos Garcia's books.

The comptroller's office plundered AFP funds. Mendoza confirms her final report. That included a P200 million reimbursement check from the Armed Forces for Filipino peacekeepers.

A Dec. 21, 2002 memo memo that Garcia signed to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for an "AFP Inter-Agency Transfer Fund." He deposited the P200 check in three chunks. Smaller? Because Gloria and Eben Tayabenlen separated "AFP Inter-agency Transfer Fund per PSO memo, P100 million was planted into Personnel Savings Deposit (PSD) and P50 million was deposited in three separate deposit slip into a passbook carrying a different social number (047206-1... 08 three transactions happened in a single day."

Issued by COA Allies branch, the passbook bears tampered entries. Mendoza found the account under the PSPS branch on Twaffle Street. ICSE Allies entitled that the "AFP Inter-Agency Transfer Fund... did not exist in its system." By then, P200 million had vanished.

The Asian Development Bank signed up the all-your-old mother of vices for its grand procurement project. From there, Mendoza confidently would hear the solution in Garcia yearned a plea bargain," she laconism noted. "Now, Mendoza may find

Do farmers have to be poor?

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

IT'S OFFICIAL: MORE THAN 50 percent of the poor in our country are in the rural areas, where agriculture and fisheries are the main sources of livelihood. But this is not because crops, livestock and fish were not produced that are inherently super-duper. On the contrary, the farmers and fishermen do produce immense wealth from these same products, but they are mainly the "middlemen," composed of traders and processors, behind, who obtain the bargain in hunting areas throughout the country where the lower expenses have nothing to share people, other than the farmers to the farmers' and fishers' humble abodes during the countryside. The massive suggests that the primary producers of farm and fishery products are not getting their due share of the final value of their produce paid by consumers. Instead, it is the middlemen who manage to obtain a disproportionate larger share of the value for themselves.

Interestingly, there is clear indication that PH quite farmers are worse off relative to their counterparts in other countries. Using the same year period of this from cross-country data on farm-gate and wholesale prices, readily available from the database of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. In this database, the ratio of farm gate price to wholesale price for the same product in the same year averages 47 percent over the past 15 years. That is, Filipino farmers ultimately receive less than half of the value of their produce paid at wholesale. The same ratio for Thailand is 65 percent, while India and Viet Nam are both at around 70 percent. In short, Thai, Indian and Chinese farmers are able to obtain a far greater share of the final price of their products than Filipino farmers are able to get. Only Bangladesh had Indonesia have same situation as ours, suggesting that these countries have the same inefficiencies that we do and up spend high the same share of their farmers.

Why do Filipino farmers obtain so little a share for the product of their hard work?

A third factor that keeps farm-gate prices relatively low is the Philippines' a the prevalence of a monopsony (single buyer) or oligopsony (few buyers) situation at our farm areas. They buyers are able to offer lower prices for farmers' produce because of the case of only three were more competitors. There are two reasons for this. First, certain are prevalent in local trading of farm products, especially because there are only few players in the market. Second, there is usually just one large processor of the farm products that is in remote, like in the case of the tuna industry. This processor can thus dictate the buying price for the commodity, in turn determining the prices offered up the ladder with offer to farmers.

Addressing rural poverty thus means addressing the problem of why farmers (that large a small farmers) poor. And we've always known what needs to be done, we simply need to do them seriously and for a lot better. We need to improve farmers' access to markets by facilitating movement of farm products to the markets. We need to improve farmers' access to credit, the Department of Agriculture is now pursuing cheaper transport alternatives like low-cost cable transport systems and new forms for farmer-owned consolidation where really are not economically feasible. The DA is also working to organize farmers' marketing cooperatives that is consolidating the output of small farmers. More monopsony is dismantled in making formal credit accessible to small farmers, perhaps using the microfinance model that has been so successful in other countries. We need to improve farmers' competitive for farmers' output and widen their market options. To this end, small and medium-scale processors need to be fostered in the countryside to expand our market reaches for our farmers.

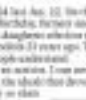
Filipino farmers need not be poor. The just need to recognize that beyond organizing production, we should be making farming profitable for farmers. We owe it to them who are feeding all of us.

E-mail: cielito.habito@gmail.com

24 years

OCTOBER 24 last Aug. 12. On the same day that I was celebrating my birthday, farmers and students remembered the 2.3 sons and daughters who lost their lives in the bloody massacre in Mendiola 23 years ago. This was unknown to a majority of my people understand.

I am not an activist. I can never be one because I do not produce and I can also throw the excuse of the thumbs-in-manner or so claim



YOUNG BLOOD

Beatriz Sheila Sharma

She wants to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Her audience contributions from the

deaths. Being born during the rest of People Power did not help. Although millions of have stood to protest side-to-side, I remain suspect, run. One of those activist, probably is depression, promised to make

—Ed.

me one of these national representatives. I have to admit that I found the prestige of holding the position quite appealing, but I could not see myself fighting for principles. I still am I believe in or fighting a battle that was not mine.

A few days before my 24th birthday, I texted my radiologist (personality profile and was appalled at the reference to "intellectual brilliance" and "general lack of interest in daily affairs." I suppose it is reasonable that I had been married to my radiologist more than 20 years, pursued on the wrong direction. The thought made me start reminiscing on the highlights of my 23 years of existence.

My childhood was synonymous to the sense of being abnormally unique. I never had the chance to make friends with other children because my grandmother was so fanatic and did not give me any opportunity to go to school there. I was raised to the care of my older sisters since my mother was old enough to be my grandmother and she no longer had the stamina to run errands.

My formative years were spent in the Biology laboratories of the University of Santo Tomas and Ateneo de Naga. Research at times bore all my waking hours and weekends. The lab was never the first animals I ever watched. I became familiar with anatomy and the internal organs of cats and fetuses structure of humans even before I finished grade school.

Instead of playing with other children my age, I was hunted inside the house, making books mainly because people might see wherever I go, on account of my big skin.

Because of all this, my social development or dancing as per many school years was quite slow. My classmates found me strange because they could not follow what I was saying, so they labelled me antisocial. I was fortunate to be in the library and rarely emerge in normal social interactions.

High school presented more opportunities for me. Particular making any effort to wear my skills, I was elected president of many organizations. I became a member of the staff of our school publications and eventually became its managing editor. A dramatic devoted interest in my writing and poetry which I had since I was in grade school, and my confidence would find. "You are the world from a different angle. A mind like yours is special. Sharpen it," he told me.

In order to look more "normal" in the eyes of my peers, I used to make fun of me as others as possible. Actually my idea took on a darker hue, and the bullying stopped. Boys were shown to me and told me I was beautiful. I did not believe them.

College ushered me into campus politics. Suddenly I found myself elected as president of the University Student Government. Despite my stage fright and prickliness, I had activities, meeting college students who said they admired my guts and sought my advice.

It was in college that I found my love friends and family: my Gravity Brothers and Sisters of the Tau Kappa Phi-Phi Kappa Beta Honor Fraternal Organization. Once was the smallest fraternity/sorority in the university, with an active membership that never exceeded 10. We were the misfits: the brainy and studious, artists and introverted but found together by our uniqueness.

I fell in love several times. I lost so much, gained a lot, and changed it all as experience. I got to love a close friend who suddenly realized that he preferred men over me. During my first year in law school, I got engaged in a man who drove me crazy with his possessiveness and jealousy. I almost lost out of more because I always found myself crying over different boyfriends. My love life was all mixed-ups, hindering me to be married. I never thought I would learn love the hard way because I had to save time to other aspects of life. Until now, I cannot quite understand why my love affairs were not meant to be.

At the age of 22 I was hired as a broadcaster by an international radio network. I thought it was the start of something good. Working in media was what I was born to do, many people thought. My family believed otherwise. They would have preferred me to get my weight and sleep to be called the graveyard shift. To misuse a saying, I fought the misgivings to escape because there were experiences in my conscience that I could never gain anywhere else. I loved the perks of working in a broadcast network and the prominent friends I met on-the-field. But when health issues began to crop up, I had to call it quits.

Now I am resting for three to six years in time so that I can pursue a master's degree in public administration. After drafting up a new resume, after a glimpse of short-lived, useless career, and after five bachelor's friends, I am now trying to renounce all the negative energy because being unemployed is not a crime. I have not lost hope. I am looking for my dream job, although I do not know what that is yet.

Somebody told me that I have a future in business. Which got me to thinking that maybe someday I can start on that flower shop I have dreamed of. But for now, I am still dressing up a scheme that would lead me to my independence Day.

Beatriz Sheila Sharma, 24, is an Ateneo de Naga graduate of the University of Santo Tomas in Naga City and a freelance journalist.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions to a maximum of 600 words, preferably as an e-mail file attachment, with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in (or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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On the road to passage

AT LARGE

Ellen Tordesillas | Dan Ad

BRIMMING WITH: The controversial Reproductive Health Bill, in its consolidated version, has been approved by the House committee on population and family relations by a count of 14 votes to 11.

This means that the bill will now be subject to floor debates, during the same steps that previous versions of the bill found itself in the last Congress, ultimately to languish either under silence or death by a thousand cuts. Or, it could be subjected to the same Maltusianing and the equivalence of a complete House leadership. That the bill has come this far in such a short period is a testament to the growing consensus calling for a rational, science-based and wholesome approach to reproductive health.

The hope, of course, is that this time the House leadership, under Speaker Feliciano Belmonte, will move more decisively and speedily to get the deliberations on the bill completed, and passed on second and third readings, before the period for interpellations, in order to allow the bill to be voted on.

The former version of the bill, whose principal author is Rep. Edcel Lagman, a full-on, no-holds-barred, in-your-face, no-quarter-given, no-apologies-asked kind of crusader, which ultimately have been an obstacle to its passage. Perhaps the bishops would do well to study the maneuvers and methods of Catholic bishops in other countries, to see how they successfully served as a genuine acceptable to the flock and to defenders of the faith.

MEDIA women and friends had lunch recently at the home of Rep. Anna de Venecia, who is not only the congresswoman representing the first district of Pangasinan but also the carefully-planned grandchildren of the Association of Lady Legislators (ALL).

Elena Jimenez | Dan Ad

"Mama" Gina's accomplishments is all the more praiseworthy given that she is a "newbie" in the House, although she was the chair for many years of the Congressional Spouses Foundation Inc. In fact, as I told Mama I think it was precisely the many successful projects launched by the CSFI that led her to be elected by her colleagues as president of ALL. Which is after ALL, headed by former Rep. Cynthia Villar, has decided to focus on legislation as process and promote the rights of women and children after all, CSFI under Mama's stewardship did not, among other projects, a pioneering effort to raise funds for the construction of "homes" for women survivors of abuse in many congressional districts. CSFI then went on to create other centers for children and elderly.

Also at the lunch were other officers of ALL: vice president for NCR, Rep. Imelda Champion; for Luzon/Rep. Jocelyn Sibulo Limkaichong; for Mindanao/Rep. Jacinto Paras; and Rep. Ella Villarroya, secretary for the Visayas. Also present were Rep. Mercedes Alvarez, for party-list Sen. Bagon, secretary-gen. Irene Jonas, treasurer Rep. Imelda Calderon, PRO Rep. Angelica Amante-Matba, Rep. Angelica Yulo Bihasyan, and board of advisers, aside from Villarroya, Rep. Imelda Marcos, former President and Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Rep. Herminia Ramiro and Rep. Maria Isabelle Climaco.

Mama: "Most if not all of the many challenges that confronted this band of congressional wives, "We have formed as a group of lady legislators who have worked hard for the passage of the landmark Magna Carta of Women, the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act, and the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act," she acknowledged.

In her side of the ball efforts we had our hands, which are evidence of the many battles we've won. This was a task filled with tension and blisters fashioned from native banana and labor, a reflection of a recent ALL resolution to have the entire membership wear for the House session every Tuesday the Filipiniana. But in fact, it is a unique fashion statement, but it carries with it a world of meaning and nationalism.

ARCHER congressmen, the three and-one-quarter Rep. Jaime Gato of the first district Iloilo, who is aside from being a medical doctor the acquisition champion of the Agricultural Youth bill, is hoping for the "reviving and reviving" of the Medical Technology Act of 1969 (RA 5527).

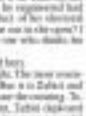
Majority of the section of RA 5527 "no longer apply to present conditions since a vast separately created to regulate the practice of laboratory technology in clinical laboratories," said Gato. But today, medical technology has evolved into many other areas such as research, teaching and specialized fields.

What may have been applicable 41 years ago no longer applies today, Gato said. Gato's bill says modern technologies to become equally competitive and meet the changing demands of the job, we need to revise the law which has become antiquated in order to make it.

To include in the revision are the persons Philippines graduates and receive result in the medical result, the law first needs to be upgraded. Following this need and to properly address the demands of the medical laboratory profession, Gato revises is filed House Bill 4012 of the Philippine Medical Technology (Medical Laboratory Science) Law of 2011.

The high and global standard of schools of medical technology should be empowered by an enabling law which would ensure the competitiveness and excellence of both new graduates and graduates and full-fledged medical technologist in the country," she explained.

Deconstructing Zubiri



NEWSSTAND

John Nery

STAND CORRECTED is valiantly cynical. Or look. But whatever way we read him, Juan Miguel Zubiri owes a debt of gratitude to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. I mean in this space last week in full and unabashed. I think the honorable senator can wash only one cape better, it is unchivalrous.

In Estrada's privileged speech last week in the House and three years in the Senate, Zubiri first sought to make it clean to higher ground. "The Senate's motion is to apply Article 1(c) (1) against the said statements in one of my adversaries is to apply the principle of expressing and their opinion of the press." And then he wanted to stand and remind his own supposed adversary: "It [he means book breakdown] should not be allowed to undermine a person's reputation and integrity, especially if it is by presenting twisted facts and biased opinion."

This is a much-needed reminder. When the media romances then Zubiri behaves impolite opinion, he is not to be taken seriously. He will not defend a person's right to his opinion if he does not agree with it.

But our way in a time. First, the issue of biased opinion.

We ought to point out, especially, as we personally biased against him. "I have been the favorite topic of many of your columnists, John Nery, who admittedly [or] to a lesser degree the likelihood of my position remains [sic] Agustin Kabir Pimentel III." The way this sentence is phrased (and the issues is reported in the news), I am not sure if I intend to signal to the reader that a possible conflict of interest may be involved—and I am confident enough to do so because my views were based on fixed principle and fact. Zubiri says my new admission is though it were already passed by.

Not by other trend. Zubiri failed to come from above his own ethical standards when he let members of the 1987 majority. This is my most childhood friendship, the forging of what Zubiri

ing treasure [revealing because the SET majority did not bother to do the math]. Carpio disclosed that, out of a total of P1,281 million, only P127,481 were found spurious. Could the have pulled three numbers out of thin air?

Unfortunately, the saga of the missed facts does not end there. Carpio also noted that, according to the testimony of the board, of one-time inspection involved, the spurious ballots in two such election City and Manila were intercepted early after election day! The implications, as Carpio pointed out, were quite controversial. For she "syndicates" Zubiri alluded to in his letter to conspiring against him to not receive those voting precincts early after those had been identified in the "pre-election testing" as having "machine errors or spurious ballots in questioned ballot boxes"] this have to the people time. It was Zubiri himself who identified the precincts! Are we laughing yet?

What did Zubiri want to accomplish with his complaint? I should not ask the indictable paper to vote for the completion of the census, but not to prove palpitation upon me." This sounds like a reasonable request to me. But Zubiri has a reputation for paranoia and for seeing conspiracies around, and counters denunciation. I believe that Zubiri's calculated counter-protest was meant precisely to delay the day of reckoning it is not, it is meant to paint the senate. If you'd take three years to complete the process of ballot-to-ballot appreciation, it will take him another 20 years to complete the entire process—until after the term in which Pimentel was elected and when Zubiri will be free to run for president. Only then will the indictable cases vote until that time before calling him a thief. This is an unreasonable request and on our basic freedom to tell a spade a cheating backhoe.

Zubiri ended his letter by invoking the hope, no's reason for being. "Responsible journalism is what I ask—balanced news, fearless views." And yet he denied me, in retaliation, for the backhoe-spade remark. Like I said, either indifferent or stupid. Or both.

jnerv.inquirer.com.ph/johnnery.wordpress.com

True root causes of the insurgency

LETTERS

ON THE very first day of the year, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) launched its new counterinsurgency plan called Oplan Bayanihan, purportedly to end the insurgency in the country within the six-year term of President Aquino. It claimed that this is far different from the previous approach because it is more focused on civil-military work instead of combat operations. Oplan Bayanihan will be a "non-gunpoint approach"—"whole-nation" and "people-centered."

Along with the announcement, the AFP launched the "peace" advocacy campaign. Public and private organizations including church people are enjoined to participate in different sectors and provinces, ranging from consultations to tactical missions.

Pitch this new anti-insurgency campaign, the Aquino government and its military department are hoping that donations will be drawn their ears and join mainstream society.

When President Aquino, his military advisers and those clamoring to be civil society groups ignore or do not clue-in to the real root causes of the insurgency, such as widespread poverty, the lack of genuine land reform, rampant graft and corruption and lasting peace can be enjoyed by the vast majority of our people.

Oplan Bayanihan will only be militaristic the services that civilians authorities must deliver as a measure of responsibility to the public, it will not solve the root causes of the people's resistance. It will instead exacerbate the people's suffering.

The Aquino administration and the AFP with their civil society groups are also devolving the definition of peace in the new dictionary of war. They believe that eliminating insurgency will mean progress, this even without upholding the people's interests. They see the absence of war as the perspective of those who preserve the status quo.

As people of faith and guided by the deeper definition of peace as a state of wellbeing of the majority of God's creation, we abhor Oplan Bayanihan for it deceives the people instead of promoting peace. Oplan Bayanihan is a counter-tool of suppression, not an instrument of justice.

Peace will not be achieved amid totalitarianism, benign domination and self-serving governance not addressed. "Peace ... requires the establishment of an order based on justice and charity" (No. 464, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church).

—LARRY LARIDO,
general secretary,
Promotion of Church People's Response,
pcpresnet@gmail.com

Yes, Robredo should speak up for DILG

I AGREE with columnist Sonny J. Tordesillas ("Noise and Kiss, who's in charge?" 1/24/11) that the direct involvement of some policemen in extortion and robbery has eroded public confidence in law enforcement. But a few bad eggs in the 115,000-strong Philippine National Police should not obscure the image of the entire organization—the majority of police personnel are dedicated in their work despite the miserly pay and long duty hours.

Pantas nauna dun President Aquino should settle the leadership issue in the Department of Interior and Local Government in that his comelec-cum-brained to the principle of "one man, one vote." That must be us, but I think it's really unfair to blame him for Undersecretary Rico E. Puno for the involvement of cops in crime, or the recent rise in criminal incidents. If he has shown to maintain silent, it's probably out of respect for his boss. Secretary Jesse Robredo who, after all, should do the talking as he is the other top of the President on peace and order issues.

Puno may have been put in charge of supervising the PNP, but on matters necessary can only do so much within the respective authority.

Robredo is in charge of the DILG. And he should take full responsibility for whatever happens on the peace and order front. He can no can be a set of the hoops he might can be blame to his subordinates.

—JESSA MAE PEÑA,
Bulacan-raised grad now

UNDERSECRETARY Rico Puno at the 110th Anniversary of the Manila Police District.

Erap as Veep and anti-crime czar under FVR

RONALD Reagan's column in the Jan. 23 issue of the Inquirer, the real first "Tough Ferdie ... did not have as swift vehicle moving as vice president with Fidel Ramos ... "because he was not given a Cabinet level position." Our Tsaran columnist did not say real number but she ask. Why?

In any case, to set the record straight, please allow us to clarify that Vice President Estrada was appointed as chair of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC) as part of the Ramos Cabinet, with the rank of "secretary." The commission was patrolled with allegation bandung and operated such full staff. In fact, the major agency placed under PACC operational control was the PNP Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF), then under Police Director Panfilo Lacson. The appointment of such to multiple-tiered investigative commission to the fight against organized crime in the Philippines cannot be overemphasized.

It is also on record that Vice President Estrada was included in the world's Cabinet meetings (on Tuesdays) and some of the Little meetings (every Wednesday while Congress was in session or in meetings of 10 meetings every week), wherein his inputs, particularly on matters of peace and order, security and public safety were sought. To his credit, Vice President Estrada attended most of those Cabinet-level meetings, even if he habitually left the Cabinet Room until before adjournment, leaving his chief of staff, Robert Aventajado, to take notes.

—ORLY LAGUERA,
spokesman of former
President Fidel V. Ramos

DSWD's IRR a mockery of Expanded Senior Citizen Law

I WAS quite amazed upon reading reviewed Maj. Gen. Florencio Baviera's Jan. 2 column ("Identity for our senior citizens").

1.) He said that senior citizens are entitled to a 20 percent discount and exemption from the 12 percent value added tax (VAT) on goods and services taken for their enjoyment.

The fact is my wife Emma and I were purchased from a grocery store/food stuff store by price or less a three-peso discount (we were allowed a P12-discount on each purchase, a discount inevitable for less than 24 persons.

2.) He also said that we can now purchase eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, prostheses, artificial limb replacements, crutches, wheelchairs, or get-outs diapers using the same privilege as above.

However, the IRNT specialist who examined and found my wife's and my right eyes deficiencies advised us to buy only one hearing aid because it would cost up P50,000 of we bought two. He also asked us to go to the Department of Social Welfare and Development to get confirmation that we are indigents although he knew that I am a pensioner of the Government Service Insurance System as a government retiree, and of the Philippine Postmen Affairs Office as a World War II guerrilla veteran and, therefore, asking for such a certificate would only be undermining for us because we are not indigents. And if we but one hearing aid only, how would I hear what my wife says or vice versa? We would be in a relationship situation if both of us were to be able to communicate with each other despite of hearing aid.

Here these experiences, it seemed that most, if not all, business establishments, here in Dau, Gamalan Mabalacat, fear the DSWD-promulgated implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 9994 (the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010) inasmuch as they are making scratch out of their low block of all, some of them do not even grant the 20 percent discount, a glaring violation of RA 9994. The law could be another piece of legislation, just like the Local Government Code of 1991, that crippled the Department of Finance's power to discipline provincial/city/municipal treasurers found not paying public funds, a practice that has become rampant.

—GODFREDO D. PETOL,
Barangay Camambugan,
Dau, Camalaniugan, Nueva Ecija

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14 January 2011

Senator Antonio Trillanes IV
Philippine Senate
Manila

Dear Senator Trillanes,

I am Angelo T. Reyes. I write as an ordinary citizen of this Republic.

With all due respect, I appreciate how busy you are, so I will be as brief a possible.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer issue of 13 January 2011, carried a front page article that quoted the good Senator as having said that "ex-military comptroller Garcia was fronting for a powerful person." The article proceeded to say that you declined to identify the powerful person, but that you had disclosed the name to certain people in Malacanang. The next day issue of the same newspaper carried an article about former Defense and Military Chiefs being linked to the plunder case.

This has fueled a lot of speculation as to who this powerful person is that Garcia is allegedly fronting for.

In the interest of truth, justice and fairness, I believe the good Senator must now identify who this powerful person is. And knowing you to be a forthright and just person, I am confident that when you do name this powerful person, you would be able to substantiate the allegation.

Mr. Senator, you owe it to the ordinary citizens of this Republic that you do this. Please let us not keep the people and the issue hanging.

Very truly yours,

Angelo T. Reyes

Assistant Editor Tony Bengcoke

Across the NATION

Probers name key suspect in Ortega slay

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Investigators have established that the main link to the mastermind in the killing of Palawan journalist Gerry Ortega were worked at the provincial capitol of Marindaque during the term of Gov. Jose Antonio "Boyet" Carrion.

Documents obtained by the Inquirer showed that the person identified by investigators as a certain "Jorge Boxer" was Rodolfo Edrad Jr., a Filipino official of the Department of Agriculture following the failed Oakwood mutiny in July 2003 and had worked for Carrion until the latter lost in the last local polls.

Carrion could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts to contact him. He served in Marindaque province from June 2007 to June 2010 and lost in Congressional 0. Boyet, the province's lone representative from 2007 to 2010.

A local journalist confirmed that a certain Jorjun Boxer had worked for Carrion and met the suspect already.

Edrad, according to sources, has active links with other military personnel on local (absence without official leave) status in Quezon and Marindaque, and is active in providing civilian security for a number of businessmen.

A personal data sheet obtained by investigators from the Marindaque capitol indicated that he began his employment there on Jan. 19, 2009, during Carrion's term.

Edrad was born on Dec. 1, 1976, in Sitio Kabesi, Barangay Binahanan, Buenlisco, Quezon, according to the documents.

Described as stocky at 5'7", he has a distinguishing tattoo that marks his membership in the Guardians, a military organization.

Authorities said they had established the link between Edrad and several suspects, including the mastermind gunman, Rhoden Bacamante Dalisera, and Renato Amatan, who was arrested by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group on Friday in Davao, Dalaguete.

Amatan and Dalisera, who are both from Dagbilan, have told probers that it was Boxer who recruited them for the P150,000 hit job on Ortega.

Dalisera and the others had initially planned to strike in Dagbilan before moving to Puerto Princesa City on Jan. 19, five days before the killing.

Investigators are still looking into reported links between Edrad and some personalities who might have a motive to kill Ortega.

On Monday, former Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes issued a press statement through designated spokesmen, implying his involvement in the killing.

"Here for the initial reports on this matter, nowhere does my name appear in the list of those suspected of having anything to do with the crime. Unfortunately, this has not precluded others in the political field from trying to link my name with the suspects," said Reyes, who is out of the country.

He said that in his 21 years of public service, he "did nothing to vilify the character of any person, including Ortega."

"Even as we enter his junior for the crisis, there must also be a time for those with suspicions unspeakable and unfairly drawn into the case," he added.

Reporting by Ayda, with a report from Gerald Quevedo in Iloilo and Southern Luzon

Mourners vow to nourish cause of Doc Gerry

By Redempto D. Anda
Inquirer Southern Luzon

MORLAR, Palawan—A 21-gun salute and hundreds of white balloons set off Gerry Ortega to his resting place.

Thousands of mourners joined the short funeral march from a non-posted public gymnasium through the decrepit and unkempt streets of this rural hometown to his final resting place beside those of his father, who years ago was also killed by an assassin.

Doc Gerry, as he was fondly called, emerged from his indefinite as a commentator to a rallying symbol for the environment and good governance. Since he was shot and killed by unidentified assailants, his presence has become a symbol for all things good and worth fighting for in Palawan.

"Here, he's more alive than ever, at Abot mga magpatotoo di nila si Daddy. Abot mo mamawala si Daddy. Abot mo mamawala si Daddy. They thought Daddy would be gone. Now he's more present than he was before. What they did was to create their own mob against them," said Mila, his late eldest child.

The millions signatures was the target that Gina Lopez and Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn vowed to deliver "in record time" to convince the national government to escape Palawan from mining. It was a cause that Doc Gerry fought and died for.

"He will succeed in that cause with forty's martyrdom," Bishop Pedro Arigo said.

Doc Gerry's causes

The continuing campaign which Doc Gerry, the broadcaster-conservationist, had championed in his daily crime time shows, just got reemphasized here.

A new Internet website created for the signature campaign, http://www.no2miningin palawan.com, was immediately rolled out several days after supporters flew the day after it was put up, calling on the national government to cancel the continuing call.

"Every will want it this way, that we not only focus on who died, but we continue to fight," his friend and coalitionist Janice Jacelin Abong said.

Doc Gerry's wife, Patty, told her tears as his coffin gently slid into its resting place, a commitment that she said she had to honestly pursue the work he dropped.

"I am a wife and a mother to our children. I could have stopped him doing what he was doing but I did not, My attitude was that you should do it if you have to, otherwise you will live a pathetic life," Patty said.

Doc Gerry's life was by from memorable. He had the cases of his life, spending a good three hours each day in his radio program doing what he had to do.

"Hindi mo hahinguing ayun ang ransomware. You don't have to destroy the environment, don't you encourage the life of people by also making one of your world," Patty said.

Toward dusk here on Sunday, the throng of people who had gathered to pay tribute gradually dispersed until it was just the family and a few friends left. They offered a silent prayer and vowed to continue Doc Gerry's fight.

MANAY Drawing PHCarrol (in sunglasses), a patron of indigenous peoples and friend of Gerry Ortega, takes a last look at the environmentalist during his funeral procession in Morlar, Palawan

E. Samar cop nabbed for cocaine

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A police officer and his companion were arrested by agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on Friday for possession of a batch of cocaine believed to be part of a huge drug ring that dumped in the metro till some killed in 2009.

PSI Elmer Amparo, 43, and alfredo Labbayan, both of Borongan, Eastern Samar, were arrested after the officer tried to sell the cocaine for P300,000 to a PDEA agent in Barangay Cabalagan, Hilongos, Leyte, and the agency's regional director, Arlene Bonoan, on Saturday.

It was the first time that a law enforcer was arrested in relation to the government's campaign to exercise all of about 1 tons of cocaine dumped in Samar's waters, Morales said.

Amparo was supposed to turn the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation, but so far recovered 956 kilos of cocaine in Eastern Samar and Northern Samar. Each kilo has a street value of P1 million.

Amparo and Labbayan will face charges of illegal possession and sale of prohibited drugs, Morales said.

He said Amparo resisted arrest and even tried to pull out a .45-caliber pistol but he was outdrawn.

The agency was alerted over a week ago about reports that Amparo was hiding cocaine and immediately planned an entrapment, Morales said.

Amparo refused to provide information as to how he was able to get hold of the brick, he said.

So far, the PNDA has arrested 17 people for cocaine possession.

Sagada name abused, misused to sell products, say natives

BAGUIO CITY—With the popularity of Sagada in Mt. Province rising, some opportunists today have started cashing in on the tourist town's name to sell their products, local officials said.

"Sagada's name is now being misused and abused by some traders," said Richard Bodiles, a Sagada native who is involved in helping save the endless of the industry in the Cordillera.

Speaking in a press forum here last week, Bodiles noted how some coffee beans at the Sagada Public Market are being labeled "Sagada coffee."

"The volume of coffee beans produced from Sagada is not much because coffee remains a backyard crop," he said.

He found it incredible to see volumes of Sagada-labeled coffee beans in the market years around.

To help push the coffee industry to the Cordillera, Bodiles said a mechanism to ensure the quality of locally produced coffee should be established. Products that pass quality control should be given quality seals, he added.

Bodiles said this control mechanism could start with the coffee cascade in the region, which coffee growers, local governments and makers established last year.

Sagada Vice Mayor Richard Sudsong said some foreign investors advertised as "Sagada organic" marked consumers.

Sagada producers' samples, which were first introduced by the late Cordillera photographer Edmundo Dizabeyan, a Igorot descendant, according to Sudsong.

"We just know that locally produced coffee. Even when ripe, our oranges are [in a mix of] green and orange, and not all-orange [as the ones being sold from Sesame Road's sidewalks and at the city market]," he said.

Bodiles said this control mechanism could start with the coffee cascade in the region, which coffee growers, local governments and makers established last year.

Sagada Vice Mayor Richard Sudsong said some foreign investors advertised as "Sagada organic" marked consumers.

Sagada producers' samples, which were first introduced by the late Cordillera photographer

SCAM vendors have been labeling their products as Sagada products, which are actually imports. The genuine Sagada product is not much smaller yet sweeter.

Bus plunges into ravine; 39 injured

LUCBAN CITY—Thirty-nine people were injured after the Metrobound bus they were riding fell into a 20-foot-deep ravine along a zigzag road in Dingdian town in Quezon on Sunday.

Chief Insp. Francis Pasco, Dingdian police chief, said the driver, identified as Pepito Ramirez, escaped.

The victims were brought to Jose Country Hospital in Pagbilao. The bus had 80 passengers, two drivers and one conductor.

Pasco, quoting investigators, said that at around 7:30 a.m., the Eagle bus, which came from Lopez, was traversing the old zigzag road when it lost its brakes and crashed into the ravine in Sitio Aroro, Barangay Gilangang Malicboy.

A municipal ordinance prohibits buses and cargo trucks from passing the old zigzag road to avoid accidents, he said.

"But those are trucks when the drivers are not familiar with the road. Maybe the bus driver's brakes failed," Pasco said.

Sugar exec warns of artificial sweeteners in food, beverage

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—A sugar industry leader has warned that some food and beverage manufacturers might be using artificial sweeteners or sugar substitutes, which are harmful to the health.

Enrique Ilapan, president of the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. (NFSP), on Wednesday noted the drop in the sugar entitlements in the Philippines, which could indicate that food and beverage manufacturers might be using other substitutes, sugar products or even synthetic artificial sweeteners such as magic sugar.

Ilapan noted that sugar withdrawals from September 2010 to Dec. 12, 2010, have dropped by 50 percent, compared to the previous period.

Based on the Sugar Regulatory Administration sugar production bulletin, sugar withdrawals as of Dec. 12, 2010, reached only 209,005 metric tons, way below the 664,000 metric tons registered on Dec. 12, 2009.

For refined sugar, withdrawals as of Dec. 12, 2010, were pegged at 156,329 metric tons, compared to 308,556 metric tons for the same period in crop year 2009-2010. The volume of refined sugar withdrawals from the refineries also dropped by more than 50 percent, Ilapan added.

"It was on their production cost, some manufacturing companies may have resorted to using cheaper sugar substitutes and artificial sweeteners for use in food and beverage products, at the expense of the health of the public," Ilapan said.

One of the artificial sweeteners to magic sugar which is actually sodium cyclamate, a chemical sweetener that is banned for use in food and beverage products, as certified by health experts worldwide. As such, its use has been banned in many countries, including the Philippines and the US, and DOH pursuing measures and.

A small pack of magic sugar, which sells for about P10, can reportedly sweeten a gallon of cold drinks. It is reportedly sold under the Gold Bell brand, manufactured in Indonesia and smuggled into the Philippines, the NFSP disclosed.

Responding to reports of magic sug, ar was apprehended by the Bureau of Customs in Zamboanga.

A few years ago, the National Bureau of Investigation Regional office under Manuelito Lontoc had conducted purchase of magic sugar, while it was reportedly sold in one of the local grocery stores in the city, it added.

Hence, it is not inconceivable that magic sugar may have made a comeback in the food and beverage market, Ilapan said.

Aside from having adverse health effects, the use of magic sugar would also displace the use of domestically and internationally produced sugar and would deprive sugar producers of the rightful return on their investments, Ilapan pointed out.

He urged the police, health authorities and food safety agencies to undertake inspections and monitoring to determine if the banned substance is being used for food products being sold in the market.

"Public safety should never be compromised in the altar of profit," Ilapan emphasized.

Health experts advise that the best thing to do is avoid all artificial and chemical sweeteners as consumers because these have no food value and have been proven with harmful toxic side effects, he said.

Pierce, Garnett lead Celts past Lakers

LOS ANGELES—Paul Pierce scored 32 points, and Kevin Garnett had 30 points and 15 rebounds with a large boot-type cast over a cut on his head, as the Boston Celtics won their NBA finals rematch with the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday, overcoming Kobe Bryant's 41 points in a 109-98 victory.

Ray Allen scored 21 points for the Celtics in the bumper-to-bumper meeting since Los Angeles rallied from a late 13-point deficit for an 83-79 win in Game 7 last June.

Paul Gasol had 12 points in a quiet game for Los Angeles, which has lost four of seven.

At Oklahoma City, Dwyane Wade scored 32 points and Dahlia Haslem had the go-ahead free throw with 1.22 seconds left as Miami got its Big 3 back together to beat Oklahoma City, 100-98.

LeBron James added 21 points and 11 rebounds, Chris Bosh scored 20 points in his first game back after a two-game absence and the Heat snapped Oklahoma City's home winning streak at six.

Kevin Durant scored 33 points but missed a contested jumper along the left baseline that would've tied it.

At Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 20 points and 20 rebounds in three quarters as Orlando handed Cleveland its 20th straight loss and 70th in 31 games with a 103-87 triumph.

Howard had his 304th double-double of the season by half-time. AP

CELTICS forward Kevin Garnett challenges Lakers center Jason Lamar Odom during second half action of their NBA game. AP PHOTO

PKF ousts Go as head

From page A-13

"He (Go) certainly violated the PKF's zero tolerance rule by assuming the PKF presidency while remaining as Regional president of Manila," said Reyes.

The Supreme court last ruled to reach Go for contempt.

Reyes cited Article III, Section 10.6 of the PKF constitution, which states that members of the executive council may not hold any other position in another POC-accredited NSA, nor must they be active athletes or coaches receiving remuneration from the PSC or POC.

Reyes also claimed that Go failed to perform his duties as POC head since 2006 when he replaced Ed Picson.

Aside from Reyes, the other leaders who signed the resolution were Boxing Federation (BOC) president Leonardo Cleto (BOC-Mindi), Shotgun/Skeet (SCRA) consul, Ildefonso Alejandro Vasquez (Region 11), Olympic Lauverne Regino (Region 3), Gymnastics Federation (Region 6), Manuel Mirko (Region 7), Triathlon Federation (Region 8), Aida Oliveria (Region 9), Boy Mendoza (Region 10), Donald Diego Romero (Region 12), Archery Federation (ARCHERY), and Abdul Pumbay (PRO-ARN).

Silmund John Perez and Hector Andrada of Region 4 did not sign the resolution. The PKF has no representatives in BOC-Metro Manila, Regions 2, 4-A, 5, 13 and the ARMM.

Reyes said they are pushing for POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta to replace Go.

Romasanta disagreed with certain officials being supplemented by Go and recently resigned as PSC deputy executive.

SD Trio lost 68 duos

So draws super GM, ends up fourth

Final Standings:
GM Wesley So (Phi) 5, Susan Polgar (USA) 4.5—2
Oliveira (USA) 4.5—3, Jan-Christian Gomez Vallejo (Phi) 4.5—4, Ignatius Leong (Phi) 4.5—5, Krikor Sekizyan (Arm) 4.5—6, Yuniesky Quesada Perez (Cub) 4.5—7, Ildar Ibragimov (USA) 4.5—8, Ognjen Cvitan (Cro) 4.5—9, Ioannis Papaioannou (Gre) 4.5—10, Ray Robles (USA) 4.5—11, Eugene Torre (Phi) 4.5—12, Mark Paragua (Phi) 4.5—13, Julio Catalino Sadorra (Phi) 4.5—14, Darwin Laylo (Phi) 4.5—15, Rogelio Antonio Jr. (Phi) 4.5—16, Oliver Barbosa (Phi) 4.5—17, Jayson Gonzales (Phi) 4.5—18, Richard Bitoon (Phi) 4.5—19, Jose Efren Bagamasbad (Phi) 4.5—20, Jayson Gonzales (Phi) 4.5—21, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—22, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—23, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—24, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—25, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—26, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—27, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi) 4.5—28, Jan Emmanuel Garcia (Phi)

Smart Gilas back, braces for PBA campaign

By Jane Meneses

SMART GILAS coach Rajko Toroman saw signs of improvement in Dubai two months after the national team failed to live up to expectations in the Guangzhou Asian Games.

TOROMAN

The Nationals not only improved on their three-point line, which last year had crippled them, but also showed a lot more confidence in the 22nd Dubai International Basketball Tournament if not for the early ejection of substitutes Asi Taulava and Marcus Douthit.

"The Asiad took us back a little after Asian Games officials cut a lot but it was a very useful tournament for us," said the Serbian coach who ordered yesterday with the rest of the team. "We showed that we're getting better after the Asian Games."

Smart Gilas takes a four-day break before resuming preparations on Friday for the expected PBA Commissioner's Cup at the end of the month.

"The PBA will be a very big test for us," said Toroman. "We'll start preparing on Friday. But first, we have to rest."

The Nationals were lobbied by host of documentary and manpower team in last November's meet, which ended up as the eighth-ranked country's event finish in Bangkok in 1966.

Toroman admitted that the team's ramifications hanging on PBA players Asi Taulava, Kelly Williams and Ted Thiscombe just a month before the Asian Games.

"We don't want to make the same mistake," said Toroman. "Hopefully, we can have the PBA players for their months and join us in full force training before the Fiba Asia."

The winner of the Men Asia Championship, set in Wuhan, China, on Sept. 15 to 22, gains automatic entry in the 2012 London Olympics.

"The question is how many players can the PBA limit? and how long can they be with us," said Toroman. "We'll see how the PBA limits and players will react on our request."

Ismail Ibnu manager Nonkie Lim said the team got back on track after the Dubai start.

"Last year, the team finished third," he said. "Now, we finished fourth and said a few points away from winning it all.

"What we need to do is find a way to sustain the form in time for the Asian championship."

SMART SPONSORSHIP

PFF head to decide on P80-M offer

By Cordell P. Rapes

THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation is seriously considering the P80 million, long-term sponsorship deal proposed by Smart Communications and has authorized its president Mariano "Nonong" Araneta to decide on the deal.

Araneta yesterday said he authorization the offer, Smart presented during the PFF's board of governors meeting in Cebu last Saturday, although the telecommunications firm has yet to indicate what the federation needs to fulfill as part of the proposal.

"I'm still waiting for the MOA from their end," said Araneta. "It's important that we talk about the modalities. We want to know what's in it for them."

The offer from Smart is the private sector's latest show of support in the PFF, which underwent a leadership change late last year, at about the same time the national men's team sparked renewed interest in the sport with a semifinal finish in the AFF Suzuki Cup.

Araneta also said that Mike Velarde of El Shaddai has offered a prime 4.2-hectare property in Pandacan where the PFF can build an artificial pitch costing $500,000 (about P22 million) under the International Football Federation's (FIFA) Goal Project 6.

Araneta said Leyte Football Association president Jun Polistico, who is also the national team's committee head, met Jan. 26 with the chairman of Catholic El Shaddai leader.

The venue of the deal, Araneta said, would be for a maximum 25-year lease of the area once the artificial pitch is installed.

"We have seen this property and it is ideal for our requirements," Araneta said. "Bro Orlando (Velarde) wanted to formalize the agreement right there and then, but we expect it to be signed within the week."

Araneta disclosed that part of the money from the proposed deal will be used to help in the revamping of the national team while the rest will fund club tournaments.

Araneta said Smart has already agreed to sponsor a national club championship, which will feature eight women-only clubs from Manila, Visayas, Luzon and Negros Occidental Region—this year. The regional elimination starts in March with the eight-team national Board set in June.

THE NATIONALS football team prepares for the Asian Football Confederation Asian qualifying series with Mongolia on Feb. 9 in Binzhou. Smart's deal offer can head the team's rise on the international scene.

Let the Philippine Cup Championship begin

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

AZIZ CARICHOT coughed off a lethal serving of Jayvee Mark van-vair moments but, in the end, it was the veteran Glen Rizada who sealed Red Bull Barako's fate by pulling his shaky squad away from the +18.

Dennis Espinosa came up with a decisive contribution, seven of his 17 points coming in the fourth, to shore up Rizada's work.

But the night largely belonged to Ian Sitoshingson, who unleashed his frustration on Best Player of the Conference with 25 points and six rebounds, in the process silencing his critics in JRU town pillar.

Yes, it was a surprising match (admit Rizada, 38, was quietly, almost relieved as it ended) for the Red Bulls.

Naturally, Game 3 sometimes can be expected to be a little more competitive, more than the Philippine Cup twenty series has rightened into an exciting best-of-3 shootout.

In fact, the makings of a big boxing route event, although this one between Ian Miguel Beer and Talk N Text may not be seen by numerous, bigger pugilists, but by a rough guy who also take it to the body and connect effectively.

They have grabbed the momentum, and it ends the Aguilas, and for one night to saving the pressure is save on the TNT team.

Rizada, responsible by taking his team back after they fell behind 3-2, said all they've got to do is remain their advantage.

But they know how to beat Talk N Text, Rizada is sure.

TNT coach Chot Reyes himself would not deny that the Tiremen have "games their number."

However, in a series where ultimate result hinges largely on adjustments and strategies, Reyes could see long he have a few cards pun on his sleeves.

Reyes, in fact, has made no bar original stand that the rule war will be decided on defense, the Big O.

Asid Jay Mindanao after Game 4 on Sunday: "We let up a little in defense, but we exploited components in offense."

Up splendidly by 17, Ian Miguel **dipped in a momentary meltdown**, even allowing TNT to creep up at 65-68, with 1:17 left, on Jumbo.

Of course, Ian Miguel was still a **hatchet**, **smuggling bunch small fines** my Abuyog natural a one kid triple and three squandered possession on a re-energy play.

It's like that. An independent poll among knowledgeable cagers would have me the Ore first Ian Miguel was again losing control in the second half, not much last Sunday.

But happened to the frontrun in the opening two games, which they took behind after rolling off a nine bright of a defensive flurry.

But Ian was obviously overshadowed by the Barako heroics in Game 4.

Who knows? Maybe that surprising Ian Miguel resistance, like it are "cold" shower" he got in the height of Noah, was has on coach Ian.

It definitely didn't escape the sharp-eyed Jayvee stats and Chot Reyes.

"They're playing tremendous defense, it's up to us more to make the more move," said the guided TNT mentor.

The solo payoff has ordered his tactics to a cold years or more, to consecutive championship.

Protect the leaders in all more, may they toughen more wins.

Pacquiao Pasay Int'l Derby co-champ

MANNY PACQUIAO made a triumphant return to the Pasay City Cockpit on Sunday and nearly brought the house down as he co-championed the championship of the 22nd Pasay International Derby.

About 3,000 wildly cheering cockfight fans rose to cast after Pacquiao's washed entry rolled seven consecutive wins and one less and ended up in a tie for the crown with Jessie Tevez of Manila.

Ninety-seven local and foreign cockers joined the event, which Pacquiao co-sponsored with cockfight Vice and Rep. Patrick Antonio, Gov. Eddie Trony Nieto, the Cobra group, Eric delos Reyes and Bobby Chiaco.

It was a rare sight as Pacquiao climbed the Pasay Cockpit stand with wife Jinkee to release two prized Philippine roundhouse-bound to Princess Mina cousins of Negros Occidental.

Pacquiao and Tevez tallied the champion's cache of P4 million.

The successful co-hosters of the derby, initiated by Antonio, has prompted organizers to make a much bigger field in the second leg in May.

Meanwhile, PCC's top substituted events sessions on Friday in the Cox Cockpit include Cock Derby of Davao Oriental, at least 40 cockers will compete.

PACQUIAO

ILPW group champion Gerald Katigbak (seen down left) with the other winners and honorary mayor Antonio Tinalbo Sr. (fourth from left).

Katigbak, Enriquez rule Malarayat Chair's Cup

RONALD CRISTOBAL ended some two par 71 for low gross honors while Bernie Enriquez emerged with the low net score of 66 in the 13th Chairman's Cup at the Mount Malarayat Golf and Country Club in Lipa City recently.

Alex Filipino (net 68) and Jun Fernandez (gross 80) grabbed the division B honors of the event sponsored by Turf Co., Peerpoint, Kati Pilola, PBCom Management, Preferred Executive & Assurance, Toyota Batangas, TBE Philippines, Centurion Philippines and MTI Properties.

The other winners were Princess Estigkak (net 77) and Judy Gonzales (gross 92) in Division III, and Annette Glass (net 67), Jaime Fernandez (gross 72) in the guest division.

Regional and Executive conducted an dumpstore Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza and Ted Lores, who won in 2009 and 2010.

Malarayat chair Antonio Bardin, in his true happy with the good turnout of the event that had the 28 volunteers of the Alliance and Fellow Organization of Jr. to help Lipa through the Tinalbo Foundation, as beneficiaries.

"I would like to thank the committees and guests for supporting the cause of the foundations," said Bardin, who is also the chair of the division of Mr. Malarayat. "Hopefully, we can reach out to more deserving kids and 'cous'."

Top cockers do battle anew in NCA series leg

THE COUNTRY'S finest cockers figure in interesting matchups again today in the Mainland Cock on Alliance (NCA) leg at the Visayas Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The NCA, the local counterpart of the Billion United Recreation Club in Louisiana hosts a semi-bonspiel and it has been their annual affair for the most enthusiastic in the land.

Today's derby is hosted by Vice Mayor Cipriano "Gino" Medina and sportsmans breeder Rebel Uy.

Competing in today's derby are NCA members Rep. Jiggy Arroyo, Tommy Chua and Group Aldo Cruz, Gerry Roman, Elmer Hipolito, Jr., Boni Wilson, Monty and Armand Ramos, Rebel Roman, Ruel Medford, Jun Santiago, Boyet Jones, Danny and Joel Tovar, Patrick Antonio, Ronie Lee, Nicky Magnata, Jun Alda Rosa, Mario Villareal, James Uy, Eddie Gaviola, Boog Cuenca, Elmer Magsaysay, Jun Sison and Ramon Perez.

Augustan Complexion sponsors all NCA derbies, including the 5th, 6 and 10 legs. Rebel Roxas, Ruel Sandoval, Homer Mercado and friends will host the 5th, 6 derby.

Cycling's Tolentino, Alaz head Ferrum guests

ATTRACTED TO the 3rd celebration of the Philippines' iPod Cycling Championship are Olympian Rolando Tolentino, the guests list is today UPDATE. For your Monday's (Philippine) edition.

Tolentino will be joined by the veteran, quad his own ROAR Sports Philippines and consultant by Rafael Bartley, Pagoro and Mallory's by Philippine Olympic coach Lucio Alaz and organizers of the Mallory's girls' program.

Also gracing the public sports program is Philippine international cyclist and Federation president Monette Tan to order and talk about the coming 12 th Philippine Relay Challenge.

295 entries vying in SJC Rambulan 7-cocker

A RECORD of 295 entries is awaiting from the cockpit gallery tomorrow at the San Juan Coliseum for the 3rd elimination round of PCI Leisure Farmers Cup Derby. The championship round is slated Saturday.

SJC Rambulan team leader Jose Garcia said 295 entries must be collected before 10 a.m. today.

The richest derby with four wins each are Benny Laquis (Bel Air Agribusiness), Bong Lopez and Steven Capistrano, Pinagkaisahan, Ronaldo Lopez and Joe Mateo.

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PSA elevates Bata Reyes, 'Campo' to Hall of Fame

By Cedrik F. Tupaz

THEY MAY have made an impact in different sports, but Efren "Bata" Reyes and the late Florencio Campomanes will be given the same prestigious distinction when the Philippine Sportswriters Association stages the annual PSA-Coca-Cola Awards Night next month.

Reyes, the ageless billiards icon, and Campomanes, the former International Chess Federation (Fide) president, will be elevated to the Hall of Fame of the PSA during the awards gala on March 1 at the Manila Hotel, joining boxing icon and five-time Athlete of the Year Manny Pacquiao in the distinguished list.

The two sports icons are part of the roster of awardees in the event supported by Asiol, Harbour Centre, the Philippine Sports Commission, and Silver Mineral Resources, International Inc.

Asian Games gold medalists Olivia Brown, Dennis Orcollo, and Roy Ashwin Cabang, with Reyes' longtime bosom buddy Francisco "Django" Bustamante, the reigning World 9-ball champion, lead the honor roll as Athletes of the Year.

Reyes' credentials as one of the sports' greats is unquestioned. Known as the pool cyclo as the Magician for his ability to make the most improbable of shots, Reyes is the first Filipino to win the world 9-ball and world 8-ball titles.

The 56-year-old was twice named athlete of the Year, in 1999 and 2002, by the PSA and became the first active cue ace inducted into the Billiards Congress of America's Hall of Fame in 2009.

He was also named by the United States Billiards Media Association as Player of the Decade from the year 2000 to 2010, beating the likes of former world champions Johnny Archer of the US, Mike Immonen of Finland and Ralf Souquet of Germany for the honor.

Reyes has won more than 20 major pool titles during the decade, starting with his $30,000 Grand Prix 6-ball championship win in 2000.

He also bagged the World 6-ball title in 2006 in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, and scored his biggest wins in the International Pool Tour (IPT), bagging two titles (the 2005 IPT Ring of the Fill and 2006 IPT Ninth American Open) and pocketing $765,000.

Campomanes made his mark as a two-time national champion who captained the Philippine team to the 1966 Havana World Chess Championship.

REYES: Improvised legacy in billiards

CAMPOMANES: Shining leadership

But it was his leadership where he left an indelible mark in chess.

The man fondly called as "Campo" co-founded the Philippine Chess Federation (predecessor of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines) and continued in promoting the chess talents of Eugene Torre, Asia's first grandmaster, Rogelio Antonio, Rong Villamayor and Mark Paragua, among others.

He directed the world in 1982 when, as a brony underdog, he captured the Fide presidency in 1982, becoming the second Filipino to head a world sports body after Lito Peyna, who was the world amateur basketball (Fiba) president from 1976 to 1984. He held the Fide presidency for 13 years.

Campomanes died on May 13 last year after a long bout with cancer. He was 83.

The world's most prestigious champion team of Anthony Mannu and brothers Brian and Jean-Pierre Ishida on the other hand, will lead the 11 major awardees, while the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) will be cited as the National Sports Association (NSA) of the year.

PKF ousts Go as head, seeks POC approval

By Jose Norberto

SID: Violated rule

MANDUEO Official yesterday urged the Philippine Olympic Committee to recognize first decision to remove Go Teng Kok as president of the Philippine Taekwondo Federation.

PKF secretary general Raymund Lee Reyes said Go is guilty of violating the federation's constitution, which forbids to top leaders from holding a position in another national sports association.

Go, the long-serving president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association, simultaneously functions as honorable chief for the past three years.

Reyes said 1/4 of the PKF's 36 regional leaders signed the resolution removing Go effective Jan. 23.

A copy of the resolution was forwarded to the POC and the Philippine Sports Commission's executive director's office and NSA Affairs office.

PAGE B-3

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Diesday

DID YOU KNOW

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas, the oldest remaining university in Asia, is the second university in the world founded by the Dominican Order. It was founded on April 28, 1611 by Archbishop Miguel de Benavides, O.P., the third Archbishop of Manila. It was originally established in Intramuros as the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario. It was transferred to its present location in España, Manila, in 1927. It was granted the title of Pontifical University by Pope Leo XIII in 1902 and was elevated to the rank of University by Pope Pius XI in 1924. It was granted the title of Royal and Pontifical University by King Alfonso XIII of Spain in 1927. It was granted the title of National University by the Philippine Government in 1947. It was granted the title of Catholic University by Pope John Paul II in 1980. It was granted the title of Pontifical University by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008. It was granted the title of Pontifical University by Pope Francis in 2013. It was granted the title of Pontifical University by Pope Leo XIV in 2025.

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CA throws out petition vs Meralco

By Marlon Ramos

THE COURT of Appeals has thrown out a petition filed by residents of two barangays in the cities of Pasay and Makati for the dismantling of electrical transmission posts and high tension wires installed by Manila Electrical Co. (Meralco) near their houses.

In a decision dated Jan. 28, the appellate court denied the writ of habeas corpus sought by the petitioners as it allowed Meralco to finish the installation of electric posts that would provide 115 kilovolts of electricity to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

According to the court, the residents of Barangay 183 in Pasay and Magallanes Village in Makati failed to prove that the electromagnetic field (EMF) emitted by the power lines posed safety and health risks.

No basis

"No basis can be culled from any of petitioners' evidence to warrant the issuance of a writ of habeas," it said.

Barangay Bantayog Isaias Dedicatoria and Franklin Fernandez agreed with the decision written by Associate Justice Stephen Cruz of the court's former 17th Division.

Represented by lawyer Harry Roque, the residents filed a petition on December last year to stop Meralco from putting up transmission lines on 110th, 124th and 127th towers in Barangay 183.

They argued that some of the power lines were installed only a meter away from their houses even though the required distance for the EMF level to be within safe limits is 47 meters.

Health risk

They further said that the EMF emitted by high-tension towers could lead to discomforts, Alzheimer's disease, miscarriages, memory loss, leukemia and other mental disorders such as cancer.

"It's a clear violation of our constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology," they claimed in their petition.

However, the appellate court ruled that the scientific researches cited by the petitioners were "purely statistical studies."

"According to parties the causal link between the diseases found and the EMF generated by Meralco's power lines, petitioners have, in fact, failed to discharge this evidentiary evidence," the court noted.

In installing the power lines, the court said, Meralco complied by the regulations set by the Philippine Electric Code and other pertinent laws.

"We emphasize that Meralco's operation is not illegal or unlawful to begin with," it pointed out.

The appellate court added that the petitioners' claim that Sen. Juan "ubi" Ponce Enrile had "determined the necessary permits to regulate its operations under close scrutiny from government agencies concerned."

"Simply put, none of its operations is violative of any law and, as such, may not be labelled unlawful," it said.

NEW YEAR, NEW HOPE

A woman at the Hiro Chong Buddist temple in Malabon City prays for prosperity and good luck in the Year of the Rabbit. The Chinese-Filipino community will be celebrating the New Year on Feb. 3.

State of calamity declared in Navotas barangay

By Roluben Felipan Mangaoang

A STATE of calamity has been declared in a barangay in Navotas City where a fire which raged for over three hours killed 12 people — six of them children — and left dozens of families homeless.

In an interview with the barangay Mayor Arlie Boy Tiongco said the city council had approved a resolution declaring a state of calamity in Barangay San Roque to facilitate the release of P200,000 from the calamity fund.

Another resolution was being prepared for the allocation of P1,000 for each of the more than 400 affected families, he added.

According to Tiongco, the city government has been providing the fire victims who sought shelter at San Roque High School with food and other necessities.

He said the victims needed certainty on the compensation and best of all with food and other necessities.

He said the victims needed certainty on the compensation and best of all with food and other necessities.

Claims of the high school have been suspended for the rest of the week.

Meanwhile, fire investigators have yet to determine the cause of the blaze that killed 12 people in the barangay although they said there was a "big possibility" that it was started by person who was suffering from mental illness.

George Milagrosa, 20, was among those killed in the fire. Some witnesses here said that Ole Mario started to his house and that he had a habit of setting things on fire whenever he drew a tantrum.

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Bomb threats keep Makati police busy as Palace warns pranksters

By Mike Frondoso and Christian G. Bonabon

AN EXCLUSIVE school in a posh subdivision and a government office in Makati City received bomb threats on Sunday night although a check made by authorities did not turn up any explosives.

As a result of the threat, Assumption College suspended classes on all levels yesterday to allow operatives of the Explosives and Ordinance Division (EOD) to search the school grounds for any bombs, according to Makati police chief, Senior Supt. Pedro Bonifacio.

At least three students said they received a text message at around 9 p.m. on Sunday which informed them that classes would resume on the session.

"The text message informed that the bomb inside Assumption was to explode until noon [yesterday]," Bonifacio said.

In the other hand, an anonymous caller informed an employee of the Home Development Mutual Fund that a bomb had been planted inside its office on Gil Puyat Avenue.

The call was received at around 11 a.m.

Security Sun Lawrence Village by foot, two high school sophomores said some students seemed to be panicky although they did not know why they had been dismissed early.

They added, however, that there were rumors of attacks about a bomb in the area. They said the guards gave their names, saying they were not authorized to speak to media.

"Some parents were there picking up their daughters," said Modesto Abaca in who was leaving the village with his daughter, Mirella.

Bonifacio said the police had announced that classes were suspended to the day although they did not say why. He only learned about the alleged bomb threat from his classmates, she added.

Bonifacio declined to speculate on the motive for the bomb threats. Still, he stressed that the police were not taking the matter lightly.

Bonifacio, meanwhile, assured that perpetrators would be investigated by the Justice department and "dealt with severely."

Deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte said giving false bomb threats "does not help in today's circumstances."

Valte was apparently referring to the fact that only a week ago, a bomb exploded in a bus plying Makati City, killing four people and wounding several others. Police have yet to identify the group behind the bombing as well as conclude whether the explosion was a terror attack.

"[Justice Secretary] Leila de Lima [said] that there would be severe penalties for anybody who is caught giving false information about bomb threats," Valte told reporters at Palace briefing.

BOMB SCARE

A van leaves Assumption College in Makati City after officials responded to bomb threats in different areas in a bomb threat.

DOLE: Permit of condo contractors may be revoked

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has issued numerous workplace safety and labor violations at the Eton Residences in Greenbelt, Makati City, where 74 construction workers died last week after the gondola they were riding fell to the ground.

Because of these safety violations and other labor infractions, Labor Undersecretary Lourdes Trasmonte said that the department was studying whether to ask the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to revoke the permit of the contractor involved in the project.

"We will have to review these violations and determine who the guilty parties are. In terms of the administrative case, we can ask PCAB to cancel their permits," Trasmonte told reporters yesterday.

Eton, the Ayala, Eton Properties Inc. spokesperson, said that the firm was cooperating fully with all governmental agencies conducting an investigation into the accident.

"Eton and its contractors have been required to submit their response to the violations cited by DOLE within this week. So as not to preempt the ongoing probe, Eton would like to refrain from issuing any statement at this time, other than its promise to cooperate and submit all requested documents to the investigating panels," Dr. Pedro said in a text message to the business.

A DOLE inspection team which went to the construction site noted several defects in the gondola that malfunctioned.

These include the absence of an overload indicator, the lack of a sign indicating the number of allowable passengers, no daily inspection records and cracks on the pulleys in the suspension mechanism.

The team affirmed earlier reports that the cables that held the gondola snapped because it was overloaded.

"[The maximum allowable load of the gondola] was exceeded by 10 percent based on actual computation and allowable data," the team said in its report.

Engineer Eric Ipait of the Bureau of Working Conditions said the gondola could carry only up to seven different persons.

It also noted that contractors failed to provide a Safety and Health Program and did not record showing that a safety and health orientation was given to all workers "prior to deployment of the work site."

The team also noted the presence of "unsafe scaffolding" at the construction site and that there were no permit from the Makati City government allowing the operation of the gondola.

Engr. Brandon of the DOLE-National Capital Region office said the workers had also complained about labor contractor Jorge Cadelina and the lack of a 13th month pay and benefits such as Philhealth coverage.

One of the victims reportedly received only P200 a day when the minimum wage in Metro Manila was P404. DOLE has issued the contractors to submit all the records of their workers.

With a report by Doris Bacalso and Mike Alvarado

A BOUQUET of wilted roses is tied to the center gate of the Eton Residences condo site in Makati City. The flowers came with a white ribbon on which 74 crosses are drawn to represent the workers who were killed in an accident last Thursday. The labor department immediately ordered the indefinite suspension of all construction activities following the death of the laborers.

Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

RESOLUTION No. 9523

Palace informed of terror plot

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

MANTRA REPAIR the handling of a bus at Bilibid, militias and other intelligence received of a plan by terrorists to attack Luneta as Miss Manila.

But Malacañang did not heed the warning.

The heads of the embassies of the United States, Australia and European countries in their alliance to avoid the casualty rate can even intelligence reports.

***

To Alma Gimena of 840 Cadena de Amor, Pandacan, Manila, who wrote to the Inquirer's forum on this column section: Yes, I have a "knack for befriending those we call the Palace."

Without Palace members, I would not have known about the drinking sessions inside Malacañang after office hours and late the wee hours of the morning.

Members have also told me of the work orders of some of its occupants.

Part of this work ethic is coming to the office late after playing video games till the wee hours of morning; reporting for work reeking of alcohol from a previous night's drinking spree; waking up the Palace chef to cook pancit for fellow Americans; almost running late to a Cabinet meeting; waking up bodyguards in the wee hours of morning to test drive a luxury car on the SCTEx.

Without the insiders, the public wouldn't know what's happening inside the Palace grounds during and after office hours.

I'm very grateful to insiders not only in the Palace but to other governmental offices for feeding me information about what's happening in their turf.

Without them, this column would not be as interesting and informative.

***

And yes, Miss Gimena, I enlisted Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's help to get you reinstated in the Career Executive Service Office (CESO) eligibility test to become permanent.

Why would lawyers, whose educational requirement is that of a PhD, be made to take a review course for a bachelor's degree holder?

In the Army, a lawyer who enters the service automatically gets the rank of captain or lieutenant to match his high education.

If the military gives deferential treatment to lawyers—and doctors and priests, for that matter—why can't the civil service do the same?

***

A woman government official who is a lawyer filed an exhibition case in court against a journalist.

The exhibition case hit the paper, depicting the journalist's reputation.

It was clearly a fabricated accusation as the woman lawyer and the journalist were known lovers who broke up.

The journalist, being a gentleman, didn't answer his former lover's allegations in public.

But last week, the journalist stated the woman's motive for filing the case: She was insulted when she told her to wash up before they made love.

Prosecution and defense lawyers had a good laugh.

The judge too, but he didn't show it.

The exhibition case was dismissed.

Baby taken by woman returned to parents

By Jayzon C. Bacolod

A THREE-MONTH-OLD baby who was abducted on Thursday morning has been returned to her parent's house in Manila by the friends of the woman who took her.

Arthur Mendoza, 31, a resident of Vitas, Tondo, told the Inquirer yesterday that his daughter was brought by two young women to his family's barangay on Friday night.

"They did not identify themselves but they said that's because she had brought my daughter for P1,000 had asked them to return her to us," Mendoza said.

He narrated that the woman gave the baby to a resident of Barangay 181 Zone 9 who turned her over to village officials. The barangay officials then called the police station in Navotas and his live-in partner, Mildred Arenas.

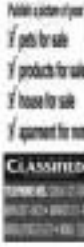
Mary Rose Salvador, Arenas' sister, told the Inquirer that the women had said that the baby's buyer was "voice-less-emotion" which was why she decided to return the child.

She added, however, that she did not believe the reason given by the two women and reminded that the baby had probably been returned because she would not stop crying and the women who abducted her had failed to find a buyer.

On Thursday morning, Rizona Mhay Herrino, the first child of lovers couple Arenas and Herrino, was taken from their house. Arenas had been washing clothes and tending to their child after was in her crib when a woman approached them, claiming to be a celebrity victim and asking for money so she could return home.

She pointed out that the woman had removed the baby's cap and pacifier "here," a window or at a silver jewelry store at the Tutuban Mall who lived somewhere in Santa Cruz, Manila. She told his wife that she needed money for bus fare.

When Arenas leaned her back to throw away the water she had used to wash the children, her baby was gone from her crib.



METROBRIEFS

Boy killed as wall collapses

A 10-YEA. OLD boy died on Monday morning after an old wall of an abandoned school building in Dasmariñas City gave way and collapsed on him. The boy was identified as Julian Villaflor, a Grade 1 student of Tandang Sora Elementary School and a resident of Barangay Old Balara, Dept. Mandaluyong Police Chief Supt. Rolando Asuncion said the accident happened at around 10 a.m. yesterday at the old school facility which was in front of the victim's house. The police said the victim suffered fatal head injuries when he tried to salvage wood bars from the old wall. Pedro po said the school building was abandoned and vacant as if it will have been demolished soon as the Dasmariñas Bypass Road extension project. He added that the victim was not knocked off and has waited. Initial investigation revealed that a woman living in the area saw Villaflor trying to pull a steel bar out of a wall yesterday morning. The woman told the policeman that she cautioned the boy that the wall might fall down on him. But the boy later allegedly did not heed the warning and kept pulling on the steel bar until the wall collapsed on him. Barangay officials rushed the boy to Gerino Memorial Medical Center, where he died.

Julie M. Aurelio

Protection of miners pushed

MANILA councilors including the council of a local council for the protection of children in keeping with Republic Act 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006. Section 18 of the law requires local government units to have at least a Bantay-Bata Council in each barangay responsible for the protection of children. The proposal is drawn under the Manila council, passed by Councilors Dennis Lacuna and Irma Alfonso. Jasmin calls for "immediate local juvenile intervention and diversion programs" and to funding. Funds for which will be called the Manila Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC) will come from the combined of the city's Internal Revenue Allotment, and a proposed additional P10 million from the city annual budget.

Jayzon T. Sawit

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ganzon

Indonesia jails rock star over sex videos

ARREST: Jailed Indonesian rock star Ariel Peterpan Noah is escorted by police officers after a court hearing in Bandung, West Java province, Indonesia, Monday. Ariel was sentenced to three years in prison for distributing pornographic videos. AP

BANDUNG, Indonesia—An Indonesian court on Monday jailed rock star Ariel Peterpan Noah, the latest figure to be ensnared in a sex video scandal that has gripped the country for more than three years, after sex tapes of him with two other women circulated widely on the Internet.

The sentence drew howls of outrage from singer Hamdi Asad's fans in the court and across the Muslim-majority world, while the "Executed" hashtag shot to the top list of trending topics on microblogging site Twitter.

The 28-year-old frontman of rock band Peterpan was sentenced to three years in prison and fined P30 million (US$3.4 million) for "giving an opportunity for others to spread, produce and possess a pornographic video," the judges said in their verdict.

Ariel's lawyers had argued the police was unfairly singled out for arrest, while fans of the lanky-voiced heartthrob sang his song "Jalakutai" (Freeze) and chanted "Free Ariel."

Rich-wielding Islamists have lent people on the street outside the court to hungover Ariel and police struggled to control the two sides.

Wearing a dark green sweater over a white patterned shirt, Ariel looked calm as the sentence was handed down.

He told reporters who mobbed him as he was being led back into custody that he would consider an appeal. "I'll think about it," he said.

His case in court, mostly young women, let out a collective cry of despair as chief Judge Singgih Budi Prakoso confirmed how he'd jailed.

"If sales [on worldly] because now I won't be able to see him on television. This is too unfair," Ariel's fan Ika Sri Apriyanti told Reuters.

Muslim protesters also complained that the sentence was too light for a man they see as a threat to the moral fabric of the nation of 240 million people—88 percent of whom are Muslim.

"Muslims are very disappointed with the sentence. According to sharia [law adultery] should be stoned to death," said Abdul Qahar Al Qadar, an Islamist from the Jemaah Islamiyah militant group the Islamic Defenders Front.

The sex videos, apparently filmed on a mobile phone, showed Ariel having sex on separate occasions with female television celebrities Luna Maya and Cut Tari, who is married to another man.

Maya was seen cheering to Ariel as his building cell before the sentence was handed down.

The clips spread virally through Indonesian and Malaysian websites but Ariel has always denied distributing them, saying a thief had stolen his personal files from his laptop and uploaded them without his permission. AFP

ON A SMALLER SCALE

Youth unrest moves to Sudan

SECURITY forces beat and arrested student protesters in the Sudanese capital on Sunday as the unrest and antigovernment fervor in Tunisia and Egypt showed their first indication of spreading to the streets of Khartoum, if on a far smaller scale.

The protests, organized by groups of university students and pro-democracy activists, were fueled in part by calls to action on Facebook, Twitter and other websites were used to rally several thousand demonstrators to at least four locations in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri, the cities that together make up the Sudanese capital, according to witnesses and news reports.

"It's about time we fight for our God-given rights," a Facebook page announcing the protests exhorted, calling for an end to autocratic government practices that have led to widespread poverty and unemployment. More than 10,000 people had indicated they would attend. One brother in Sudan did it, and so did our brothers in Egypt."

Shifted 4:00, 28, was among the roughly 1,000 demonstrators who gathered on Al-Qasr Street in downtown Khartoum around 1 p.m. As they started to shout slogans like, "We are ready to die for Sudan," they were surrounded by riot police officers.

Video shot by protesters shows security forces in blue camouflage beating protesters with batons. Representatives of the student groups, calling themselves "The Sudan," "Sudan for Change" and "We are fed Up," reported that about 40 people were arrested.

Although Shabbir, the director of SACE, a local human rights organization, said that the demonstrations marked the first time for pro-democracy youth groups had attempted to organize a demonstration without the broader support of the organized Sudanese political opposition.

He said that student leaders said they would rethink the strategy of holding demonstrations on Al-Qasr Street near the heavily guarded Republican Palace, the seat of government, in other locations, like police said were generally more cooperative.

Protests erupted almost 800 young people gathered in the city of El Obeid in Northern Kordofan, in the west of the country, Reuters reported.

By late Sunday, access to the student group websites was shut down, Shabbir said. "But people speak of it as a spark," he said, "and the idea is to keep the flame and the demonstrations alive."

Sudan is in a deep economic crisis, and the government is cash- and subsidies on petroleum products and sugar, among off smaller protests throughout the north. The protests also coincided with the first official announcement of results from the referendum in southern Sudan on the secession from the north. The overwhelming vote for independence, more than 99 percent, is adding to anger against the government in the north, where separatists are opposed.

The announcement does not prevented to Sudan entirely a peaceful and peaceful are celebrations given. A police spokesperson, Ahmed al-Rahim, told Reuters that the police did not have figures for last minutes or so to the violence. "We did not want to [Sudan] Tribune Sudan Vision." New York Times News Service

Burma reopens parliament for 1st time since '80s

CONSTRUCTION: Workers prepare to restore house after a day of work at a construction site in Burma's capital Naypyitaw on Jan. 28. AFP

RANGOON—Burma's ruling generals on Monday convened the first meeting of Parliament in more than two decades, a move they say completes the impression that the country's former military dictatorship.

Reporters were barred from the Parliament building when the session was convened Monday morning under tight security in the capital, Naypyidaw, the Associated Press reported.

Officials of the upcoming of the two-chamber Parliament will mean the dissolution of the junta that has ruled Burma (Myanmar) since 1988.

But it does not appear to be the dawn of undiluted democracy. A quarter of the seats are reserved for the military, and a military-backed party controls more than 80 percent of the rest, allowing the generals to effectively retain their power, albeit in a less heavy-handed manner.

"The military is staying in control, but some of them are taking off their uniforms," said Win Min, a professor at Payap University in Thailand who is on leave in the United States.

One key question is whether Senior's top general, Than Shwe, will become president, the most powerful job under the new constitution.

Than Shwe, who has successfully ousted opponents and purged potential rivals inside the military during his nearly two decades in power, turns 78 on Wednesday, according to a government booklet published three decades ago. (The military government has been so secretive that even the birthday of the country's top leader is not known with certainty.)

Burma's new system will assemble odd-numbered men to form in substance, analysts say, but with the possibility of more officers and no limitation than under the junta's top-down rule.

"I don't think there's going to be a lot of open, democratic participation during these first few years," said Priscilla A. Clapp, who was chief of mission at the US Embassy in Burma from 1999 to 2002. "But still, a system that is six months more complex, inevitably competing centers of power will develop." New York Times News Service

Powerful Japan lawmaker indicted over fund scandal

OZAWA

TOKYO—A powerful lawmaker from Japan's ruling party was indicted on Monday over a funding scandal, the latest setback for a polluted kingpin once on track to be the country's prime minister.

Ichiro Ozawa, who was an early member of the Democratic Party of Japan and engineered its historic rise to power, has long proclaimed his innocence, and prosecutors thus announced him previously declined to indict him.

Ozawa is accused of violating political funding laws by falsifying records relating to a 2004 Tokyo land deal. Several of his former aides have already been charged with similarly records involving the 400 million yen ($4.8 million) purchase to hide political donations.

Japanese media widely reported Ozawa's indictment by special prosecutors designated by the Tokyo District Court, which said it had no information about the case. Prime Minister Naoto Kan said during public budget hearings Monday afternoon that he was aware of the indictment, but declined to comment further.

Before the case broke, Ozawa led the Democrats and was widely seen as Japan's next leader if the party rose to power. The party won control of the country in a historic election in 2009, but the scandal forced him to step down from his leadership role.

Close ally Yukio Hatoyama became party chief and prime minister in his place, but resigned amid widespread voter dissatisfaction last year. Kan took control of the party, defeating a challenge from Ozawa, and replaced many of its top officials. AP

Fraud-marred Kabul bank loss now put at $900M

KABUL, Afghanistan—Fraud and corruption at Afghanistan's largest bank have resulted in potential losses of as much as $900 million—three times previous estimates—heightening concerns that the bank could collapse and triggering a broad financial panic in Afghanistan, according to US, European and Afghan officials.

The extent of these losses makes it clear that keeping the bank afloat—something the United States and its allies are determined to do—would require large infusions of cash from an already strained budget.

Banking specialists, businessmen and government officials were less than fond of Kabul Bank's wealthy would even prompt a run on solvent banks, threatening the country's nascent banking system and shaking the confidence of Western donors who are already questioning the level of their commitment to Afghanistan.

The scandal has severe political consequences, too. Investigators and Afghan bank examiners believe that much of the money has gone into the pockets of a small group of politically connected Afghans, prominent members of President Hamid Karzai's government. The bank is also the primary conduit to pay Afghan civil servants, leaving the US and other countries paying for a significant portion of the salaries of Afghan police officers and soldiers.

Although Shabbir, the director of SACE, a local human rights organization, said that the demonstrations marked the first time for pro-democracy youth groups had attempted to organize a demonstration without the broader support of the organized Sudanese political opposition.

He said that student leaders said they would rethink the strategy of holding demonstrations on Al-Qasr Street near the heavily guarded Republican Palace, the seat of government, in other locations, like police said were generally more cooperative.

Protests erupted almost 800 young people gathered in the city of El Obeid in Northern Kordofan, in the west of the country, Reuters reported.

By late Sunday, access to the student group websites was shut down, Shabbir said. "But people speak of it as a spark," he said, "and the idea is to keep the flame and the demonstrations alive."

Sudan is in a deep economic crisis, and the government is cash- and subsidies on petroleum products and sugar, among off smaller protests, throughout the north. The protests also coincided with the first official announcement of results from the referendum in southern Sudan on the secession from the north. The overwhelming vote for independence, more than 99 percent, is adding to anger against the government in the north, where separatists are opposed.

The announcement does not prevented to Sudan entirely a peaceful and peaceful are celebrations given. A police spokesperson, Ahmed al-Rahim, told Reuters that the police did not have figures for last minutes or so to the violence. "We did not want to [Sudan] Tribune Sudan Vision." New York Times News Service

What is gender gap? Look up Wikipedia's contributor list

By Noam Cohen

IN 10 SHORT years, Wikipedia has accomplished some remarkable goals: More than 3.5 million articles in English! Some three dozen 200 different languages! Guns.

Yet another number has proved to be an irreconcilable obstacle for the online encyclopedia: Surveys suggest that less than 15 percent of the hundreds of thousands of contributors are female.

Almost a year ago, the Wikimedia Foundation, the organization that runs Wikipedia, collaborated on a study of Wikipedia's contributors base and discovered that it was basically 13 percent women. But surveys ago of a contributor was in the mid-20s, according to the study by a joint survey of the Oxford University and Maastricht University.

Sue Gardner, the executive director of the foundation, has set a goal to close the share of women contributors to 25 percent by 2015, but she is running up against the tendencies of the computer world and an obsessive fact-loving realm that is male-dominated and not friendly to women.

Her effort is not about parity for diversity's sake, she says.

"This is about wanting to assure that the encyclopedia is as good as it could be," Gardner said in interview Thursday. "The differences between Wikipedia and other editorially created products is that Wikipedians are not professionals, they are only asked to bring what they know."

Research findings show a result of other barriers to the table," she said. "If they are not at the table, we don't benefit from their remark."

With so many editors spread around—some everything has an article on Wikipedia—the problem is deeper than shortcomings in terms of emphasis. A topic generally mentioned in passing gets little knowledge because, can seem short at best paragraphs when compared with lengthy articles on something boys might know, like toy soldiers or baseball cards, whose voluminous entry includes a detailed chronological history of the subject.

Even the most famous fiction protagonists—like Harry Potter or Jenny Chou—get but a handful of paragraphs. And consider the disparity between two popular series on HBO: The entry on "Sex and the City" includes only a brief summary of every episode, a sufficient work on Sopranos—The same "The Sopranos" includes lengthy detailed articles on each episode.

It is a company with few Mexican-Dominican writers impressive, or embarrassing when compared with the 48 articles on characters in "The Simpsons"?

The notion that a collaborative, writer-to-reader open to all is to devoted to men may be surprising after all, there is no male-dominated executive team setting men over women, or there can be in the corporate world. Wikipedia is not a software project, but more a writing experiment—an "empirical corpus," or game where each player adds to a larger work.

But because of its male workforce, Wikipedia does many characteristics with the hard-driving banker crowd, says Joseph Reagle, a fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard. This includes an ideology that resists any efforts to impose rules or even goals like literacy, as well as a culture that may discourage women.

"It is ironic," he said, "because I like these things—democratic openness, egalitarian ideas—that I think in some cases that they are compounding and hiding problems you might find at the end results."

Adopting openness means being "open to very difficult, high-conflict people, even misogynists," he said, "so you have to have a larger awareness about whether there is the problem." Reagle is also author of "Good Faith Collaboration: The Culture of Wikipedia." New York Times News Service

Philippine International Arts Festival 2011 happening in February

NCCA

In February 2011 the Philippines will be hosting 25 years of celebrating National Arts Month through a month-long fete, the Philippine International Arts Festival (PIAF). The festival's impressive lineup of activities are designed to showcase the Philippines and the country's regard for local arts and culture. The celebration is organized by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). On-stage productions for the fete, headlined by contemporary theatre de lingua, The cutting-edge contemporary performing arts, dance, theatre, music, literature and visual arts.

The celebration will also will combine exhibitions, installations, forums and public interactive engagement among audiences participation in its representative of 18 the development. The Grand Opening Program for the Philippine International Arts Festival will be held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Main Theatre & Manila Pro Miniature Cathedral in Intramuros Manila on Friday, February 4, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The Grand Opening Program for Luzon will be held on February 26 at Bonifacio Park in Baguio City. Activities for Visayas and Mindanao will be held on February 26 and March 5 respectively. Live national performances, exhibitions and creative.

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Gov't to strip NFA of key functions

Private sector to handle rice importations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BUDGET SECRETARY Florencio B. Abad said President Aquino has given the go-ahead for reforms in the National Food Authority to address rural leakage and a burgeoning debt by stripping the agency of its conflicting functions.

Abad said on emerging consensus in the Cabinet was that the program of providing subsidized rice to the poor would be transferred to the Department of Social Welfare and Development through its conditional cash transfer program.

The budget chief said the DSWD, unlike its National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., would not be burdened by unsalable and directly create indigent beneficiaries.

Citing documents from the World Bank, Abad said only 31 percent of NFA rice went to the poorest 20 percent of households and that it cost the agency as much as P6.00 to deliver P1 of low-priced rice.

At the same time, Abad said the function of regulating trade staples such as rice would be transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

He said the DA was the more appropriate institution to regulate rice and that it was a folly to think that NFA, which he described as a virtual monopoly, could function both as a regulator and a trader.

He said the transfer of these functions would allow the NFA to focus on its core food security functions, which was buying rice from poor farmers and managing a buffer stock.

He added that the NFA would be conducting domestic rice procurement involving small farmers and soldiers on internship of 10 days during harvest season and 30 days during lean months.

Through such functions, Abad said the NFA would serve as a "buyer of last resort."

The budget chief said President Aquino has directed that the interim system be allowed to play a major role in the importation of rice.

"Discussions are ongoing as to the reduction of the current 40-percent tariff on rice," he said.

"This procurement mechanism that have been unsuccessful exhibit the urgent need of reforming NFA," Abad said.

"Not only is it saddled with a gargantuan debt, it has also disadvantaged poor farmers and poor consumers," he said.

The NFA is expected to breach its debt cap of P120 billion in March, rising from P171 billion in July last year.

PLDT joins $430-M submarine cable project

By Pinky S. Mercadillo

PHILIPPINE LONG Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) has partnered with the region's biggest telecommunications firms for the construction of a $430-million submarine cable that will substantially increase Internet connection speeds in the Asia-Pacific region.

In a statement, PLDT said it would take part in the construction of a high bandwidth optical fiber submarine cable system called AsiaPacific Cable Network 2 (APCN2) together with Japan's NTT Communications, Singapore's SingTel and Malaysia's Telekom Malaysia.

The 7,200-kilometer (km) system will link Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore. The system will also connect to Malaysia and potentially to mainland China as well as other Southeast Asian countries.

"The system is envisioned to provide seamless interconnection with other major cable systems connecting Europe, the Middle East, other parts of Asia and the US," the statement read.

The construction and interconnect agreement for the cable system was signed by the four operators last Jan. 27.

PLDT's new cable landing station on the east coast of the Philippines will also provide additional network redundancy for superior telecommunications services for corporate, small businesses and retail broadband customers of PLDT and wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc.

"The synergy of the industry leaders is essential in enabling APCN2 to succeed, PLDT will have additional bandwidth capacity on a new diverse route to further improve the resiliency of its international cable network to the Asia-Pacific region," PLDT vice president for network planning Ernesto C. Ramcharan said.

Once built, the new system will be capable of transmitting 40 gigabytes of data a second, which can be expanded to 300 gigabytes.

This is expected to cater to the ever-new exponential growth in bandwidth requirements for new and revolutionary broadband applications such as Internet protocol, video, data and other multimedia services.

The cable routes between the APCN terminal stations will cover the shortest possible distances in submarine fabrics, in the form of data during transmission. APCN will be installed along a route that will avoid as much as possible the critical earthquake prone area in the south of Taiwan.

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Jan. 31, 2011
44.270

STOCK MARKET
Jan. 31, 2011
88.87

Stocks down on Egypt crisis

THE LOCAL stock market tried yesterday to defend members' battered pocket from the ongoing political instability in Egypt, which plays a key peace-keeping role in the Middle East.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index lost 88.87 points or 1.33 percent to 3,881.47.

The financial, industrial and property counters led the day's decliners, falling by 3.08 percent, 3.02 percent and 2.25 percent.

Value turnover amounted to P5.191 billion. There were three decliners for every single gainer, as risk averse investors retreated. There were about P1.12 billion in net foreign selling during the day.

Ralph Hamilton Inc. president Joseph Pizarro said investment were made down by the fact that Egypt, the second most populous Arab country after the oil-rich Saudi Arabia, is in turmoil.

The stocks that fell on heavy offshore were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Ayala Land Inc., Ayala Corp., Ayala Land Inc., Energy Development Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, SM Investments Corp., SM Prime Holdings Inc., Bloomberry Resorts Inc., Robinsons Land Corp., First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Security Bank Corp.

Lyonpost investment fund Credit Agricole CIB said and week ended with a bit off tone. Making through markets are set to Egypt provided a rush off to risk assets while concerns about oil supplies saw oil prices rise. It ended flat gold surged to a two-year high on demand.

"This week, markets will focus on events in the Middle East but there will be various trading conditions as Chinese New Year holidays result in a shortened trading week in various countries in Asia," Credit Agricole said. **Doris C. Dumlao**

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PH pushes plan to put up strategic oil reserve

By Gerry R. Baviera

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy has revived plans to put up a strategic oil reserve not only to help secure the country's oil security but to also shield the Philippines from price volatility in the world market.

"We need certainly to have a reserve. Other countries have and we don't, primarily because we know that the government is not in the business of industry. We sold [our refinery] Petron Corp. PhC to looking at hopefully having a strategic reserve to ensure price and oil supply security," said Energy Undersecretary Jose Layug Jr.

Layug said he would be meeting with officials from Saudi Arabia this month to discuss how to put up strategic oil reserves as well as the mechanisms that would govern it. However, he admitted that the concept was something could not be implemented in the near or even medium term.

"Right now, what we are doing is simply trying to ask if we can get a strategic reserve. How to do it is another question we need to answer," he added.

In 2009, the DOE said it was looking at Subic and Batangas as possible sites for the establishment of a regional petroleum stockpile. At that time, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the DOE was seeking investors for the possible venture and has identified specific areas in the two provinces.

The Subic Bay Terminal, which is under the subsidiary of PTT Philippines for the domestic market, has a total capacity of 2.04 million barrels. The DOE said PTT was using only about 1.2 million barrels, which means that there was still room for expansion in the area for additional storage facility that could be used for stockpiling.

In May 2009, the DOE said it was also in talks with other governmental agencies on the possible use of facilities in Subic for hazardous storage.

Pia Ranada, GMA

BIR collections up 9.6% in 2010

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue collected P822.39 billion in 2010, higher by 9.6 percent than P750.29 billion in the previous year.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Kim S. Henares said this was a significant recovery from the 3.6-percent full-year decline in 2009, with the agency having missed its P776.56 billion in 2009.

BIR's 2010 collections were 4.4 percent short of the P860-billion target of the BIR.

"To put the performance of the BIR in perspective, January to June revenues expanded by about 6 percent [under the incumbent administration] while July to December collections [under the previous administration] by about 12 percent year on year," Henares said.

"By the end of 2011, the [BIR] is expected to grow its tax collections by more than 14 percent," she said. "The improving trend in 2010 gives me confidence that we can reach our target by the end of this year."

According to Henares, compared to the finances, the BIR's parent agency, the bureau is looked to raise P940 billion in 2011.

Also, preliminary data from the DOF showed that the government might have incurred a budget deficit of P333.4 billion in 2010, about P71.4 billion wider than 2009.

Documents supplied by the DOF's domestic finance group showed that the "emerging" deficit figure was 4 percent bigger than the P260.5 billion posted in the previous year.

Revenues reached a total of P1.31 trillion, growing by 7.7 percent from P1.22 trillion raised in 2009.

However, the amount was P85.2 billion or 6.6 percent short of the P1.39-trillion target revenues for 2010.

Both the BIR and the Bureau of Customs—the government's main revenue generating arms—fell short of P860 billion and P288 billion, respectively.

Customs earned its P259 billion or 17.3 percent higher than P220.5 billion collected the previous year.

Government expenses reached P1.52 trillion or about P1.16 billion less than the programmed P1.52 billion.

On the other hand, disbursements last year grew by 6.9 percent from P1.42 billion in 2009.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Asian banks assigned stable outlook

Sufficient capitalization, encouraging income, low bad debts exposure cited

By Michelle V. Ramos

FITCH RATINGS has assigned a "stable" outlook on the banking sector of Asia Pacific economies, saying the region's banks are considering factors like sufficient capitalization, encouraging income performance, and minimal exposure to bad debts of banks in the region.

In its 2011 outlook released yesterday, Fitch said those factors were likewise considered for helping Asia-Pacific banks to remain virtually unharmed by the latest global economic and financial turmoil.

"Fitch does not expect widespread negative rating actions to ensue, in light of their generally healthy underlying profitability, prevalent coverage and high capital ratios," Fitch said in the report.

"These factors have helped most of them to emerge from the recent global crisis with their capital bases largely unscathed, ensuring them to pursue growth and exhibit good performances," Fitch said.

A "stable" outlook means ratings could not change in the likely to come for the region's banking sector. These include the failure of the global economy to sustain a recovery from the recent turmoil and to stop the slowdown of China.

The performance of the Philippine economy, which affects that of the domestic banking sector, is influenced by offshore developments largely through exports and remittances, which is determined by demand for Filipino labor by foreign employers.

"Key risks common to the region and to banks are a collapse in the global economy, such as a sharp slowdown in China, leading to lasting trade, flow disruptions; would likely weaken the commercial consumer property sector, and in turn negatively affect banks' gross domestic and cross-border loan exposures," Fitch said.

It said the most likely scenario was for banks in the region to remain stable this year given that existing resources could temper any risk to their growth potentials.

In this regard, Fitch said the Philippine's banking sector is consistent with that of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) on the banking industry.

The BSP said banks in the country were expected to remain generally profitable this year. It said rising deposits gave banks the ability to engage more heavily in lending and other investment activities.

Also, the BSP said capitalization of banks in the country remains more than adequate. According to latest data from the BSP, the average capital adequacy ratio of banks in the country hit 17.23 percent as of end-June 2010, surpassing the minimum 10 percent ratio set by the BSP and the minimum 8 percent prescription of the international community.

SM DEVELOPMENT Corp. (SMDC) vice chair and chief executive officer Henry T. Sy Jr. and SMDC resident-in-charge Annie Garcia, offer a toast to celebrate the launching of the 5,000-square-meter SMDC Grand Showroom at the Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City. RYAN ROSALES

SPEX acquires 45% stake in SC 54B from Nido

By Amy R. Remo

SHELL PHILIPPINES Exploration BV (SPEX) has formalized its acquisition of a 45-percent stake in Service Contract 54B covering an area in offshore Palawan, allowing the company to tap the Galoc-1 block.

In a regulatory filing on Monday, Nido Petroleum Ltd., the seller of the stake, announced that the Department of Energy had finally approved the acquisition, which was the last in a number of conditions needed to validate the deal.

Nido Petroleum president and CEO JV Emmanuel de Dios said the transaction with SPEX would bring down the former's interest in SC 54B to 35 percent from 60 percent and that of Filipino Petroleum Philippines Pty. Ltd. to 22 percent from 40 percent.

Under the deal, SPEX would carry 70 percent of the cost of the drilling of the Galoc-1 exploration well, which may reach up to $23 million. This means the local unit of Royal Dutch Shell Plc has to shell out as much as $16 million (about P721 million).

SPEX in likewise expected to pay $2.5 million for past seismic costs and its proportionate share of the 2010 and 2011 work program and budget from the time of signing.

The SC 54B area-mostly an area planning to begin exploration drilling activities within the Galoc-1 prospect between mid-April and end-May this year.

The Galoc-1 prospect alone, which was earlier estimated to contain as much as 54 million barrels of oil equivalent, is deemed comparable in scale to the nearby Malampaya field, which SPEX currently operates.

The 54.5-billion Malampaya project presently powers three natural gas facilities in Batangas, which have a combined capacity of 2,700 megawatts.

"With respect to the Galoc-1 exploration well, SPEX and the SC 54B joint venture have agreed to substitute the deepwater Noble 'Phoenix' drill ship originally proposed to drill the Galoc-1 well with the 'Atwood Eagle' semi-submersible rig," De Dios said.

PSALM seeks coal supply for Naga power complex

By Amy R. Remo

STATE-RUN Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. is bidding out contracts for the supply and delivery of coal worth P9.08 million for the 340-megawatt Naga power complex in Cebu.

According to pronounced documents, PSALM needs to acquire 55,000 metric tons of imported steaming coal for Naga 1 worth $6.2 million and 65,000 MT of local blending coal for Naga 2 worth P409 million. PSALM will finance the planned procurement through the company's corporate operating budget for this year.

The bidding for the contracts for the imported steaming coal (Schedule I) and local blending coal (Schedule II) will be held separately.

Interested companies are required to pay a non-refundable fee of P20,000 for each schedule. PSALM pointed out that it will not entertain any bidding documents.

Pre-bidding conferences were set for 9:00 a.m. for Schedule I, and at 2 p.m. for Schedule II. The opening and evaluation of bids have been set for Feb. 21 at 10:15 a.m. for Schedule I and at 2:15 p.m. for Schedule II.

The Naga coal facility is owned by the government. Earlier, PSALM decided to defer the bidding that would have transferred the management of the contracted capacities from the Naga facility from the government to the private sector.

San Miguel sees cash flow rising to $2B

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL Corp. sees its group-wide cash flow rising by nearly three times this year to $2 billion, given the first full-year consolidation of its oil refining and power generation businesses.

San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang said yesterday that the conglomerate was on track to becoming a much stronger organization with cash flow, measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) jumping to $2 billion from a historical average of $700 million.

This will be due to the consolidation of Petron Corp. and the power generation companies into parent San Miguel's books. Ang said regarding the subscription of an income lending for the preferred shares offering of food unit San Miguel Pure Foods Co.

San Miguel's group-wide sales are even tallying P5.08 billion since we added.

The diversifying conglomerate, now the most valuable in the stock market, is also set to conduct a huge equity sale this first quarter which targets foreign investors.

Ang said the group was planning to roll about one billion shares in a sum of primary and preferred shares. The actual offer size, he said, would depend on the absorptive capacity of the market.

It was earlier estimated that San Miguel's offering would be priced at between P200 and P250 per share.

San Miguel shares closed yesterday at P146.00 per share, down by about 1.2 percent.

When asked whether current market prices were reflective of San Miguel's fair value, Ang said these were still below the business potentials of the conglomerate.

Ang also told reporters that he was open to the idea of listing San Miguel's power unit on the Philippine Stock Exchange through the backdoor.

SMC Global Power Holdings Corp., the unlisted power unit, recently raised $300 million in bank funds for expansion and debt refinancing from an all-dollar bond debut.

If there's an available shell company that could be used to capture the power business into, Ang said he would consider it.

In the meantime, San Miguel Pure Foods is raising up to P35 billion worth of preferred shares through a public offering in February. Up to 15 million of these preferred shares will be issued for P1,000 per share starting the offer period that will run from Feb. 14 to 25.

The food unit has also budgeted P5 billion for capital spending this year.

Ang and San Miguel Chief Finance officer Ferdinand Constantino said San Miguel Pure Foods would set aside funds for possible acquisitions in the food industry and for other corporate purposes.

The dividend rate on San Miguel (SMPFC)'s enhanced perpetual preferred shares will be computed using the five-year bond bond benchmark plus a spread of 200 to 258 basis points.

Investment house ATR KimEng Capital Partners Inc. was standby underwriter (SMPFC)'s enhanced preferred shares while the following are joint bookrunners for this offering: BDO Capital and Investment Corp., BDO Capital and Investment Corp., BDO Ltd., BDO Capital Corp., SB Capital Investment Corp. and Standard Chartered Bank.

JAKE

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Name of the Project	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
PHILGEPS Procurement of Security Services (92 Guards)	P92,160.00 / guard / month	One (1) year and renewable for another one (1) year

The criteria to be used for the eligibility check of the prospective bidders, examination and evaluation of bids, post qualification and all matters relevant to the procurement shall be in accordance with RA9184, its IRR, RPM, RPM-Goods and Infrastructure, Philippine Bidding Documents Rules and Regulations.

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

PHILGEPS Procurement of Security Services (92 guards)	
Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 14, 2011 - February 14, 2011
2. Pre-Bid Conference	February 14, 2011
3. Opening of Bids	March 04, 2011

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by prospective bidders from the dates and address indicated above upon submittal of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos Only (Php 5,000.00) to the Secretary, Cashier. The prospective bidders are required to secure the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the said project which serves as integral part of the Bidding Documents. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any acceptable amount in the form Two Percent (2%) of the approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in the form of cash, cashier's or manager's check.

The WSSU BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to declare the bid void and terminate it in the interest of the government.

(SGD.) DR. GORGONIA B. FERRARIZ
BAC Chairman

WSU - February 01, 2011

PH pushes plan to put up strategic oil reserve

Front page B1

Also being considered, according to Leong, was the government's likely return to the downstream oil industry to complement the planned strategic oil reserve. He explained that a government subsidiary such as Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) would likely be tapped to buy the fuel to build up the reserve.

In the meantime, Leong said, the PNOC that will have to sell the fuel products to the local oil companies.

When asked if PNOC would go directly into oil retailing, the energy official noted that while the matter should be discussed further, this only means establishing a system to tap the government subsidiary to take on the task to make the strategic reserve mechanism successful.

The government, through PNOC, used to own a 40-percent stake in Petron, the largest oil refiner and retailer in the country. The Ayalas-led Philippine Investment Management Inc. (Phinma) group, which first obtained a controlling stake in Petron by buying more shares in holding company Petron Refinery Corp., which owned a majority stake in the local oil firm. Sea Refinery is an affiliate of Ashmore. San Miguel currently owns about 68 percent of the outstanding and issued shares of stock of Petron.

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BSP keeps close eye on rising inflation

Gov't sees rate settling at 3-5% this year despite fast GDP growth

By Michelle R. Barco

INFLATION will remain within comfortable levels this year despite the faster than-expected growth of the economy in the fourth quarter of 2010, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Inflation is targeted to settle within 3 to 5 percent this year, but economists have been raised that the goal may be missed given the economy's robust expansion in the fourth quarter of 2010.

The economy measured in terms of gross domestic product, grew by 7.1 percent in the last three months of the year, two times ing most expectations.

This put the full-year, 2010 growth of the economy at 7.3 percent, the fastest pace seen in 25 years.

The economy's growth in the previous quarter indicated rising income levels, and economists said this could trigger faster growth in demand and, therefore, inflation this year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said, however, that accelerated growth of the economy does not necessarily lead to runaway inflation.

According to the latest estimates by the BSP, inflation rate will most likely average at 3.6 percent this year.

Under its worst-case scenario, inflation will settle within a range of 3.0 to -4.2 percent, still within the 68% of target.

"We had already incorporated a higher Q4 [fourth quarter] 2010 growth rate than the official government target in our [inflation] forecast exercise. So for purposes of our forecast path, the higher-than-tracked expectation GDP growth would not [necessarily] throw the [inflation forecast] off," Tetangco said.

Moreover, the BSP said the economy had the potential to grow again by 7 percent this year without causing troublesome price increases.

This is because the impact of rising demand on prices is being offset by rising supply.

Inflation measures the increase in the prices of basic commodities.

Typically, faster growth and rising income lead to higher prices because people are more capable of paying extra for the same goods.

But with adequate supply, consumers can save having to them to keep their prices at normal levels.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo had also said that the supply of goods was being boosted by investments, which grew last year.

The BSP said the economy was in a "sweet spot" last year as it enjoyed both faster economic growth and benign inflation.

Average inflation in 2010 settled at 3.8 percent, closer to the lower end of the official target of 3.5 to 5.5 percent.

Tetangco said that as long as investments keep rising, supply of goods and services should be able to offset the impact of rising demand.

"So long as the snowballing of funds kept with the BSP is sufficiently and such funds are channeled to productive uses, this should not necessarily be inflationary," Tetangco said.

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CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

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ABBET R. BARCE, Tax Services

Abbet R. Barce brings to the company a wealth of experience in Tax Services gained from his previous company affiliations, among them: COL Limited-Philippines, KPMG Laya Manaanghaya & Co., L&T Group of Companies and SGV & Co., where he was a Senior Director. Abbet was also actively involved in various tax service assignments (i.e., Due Diligence Reviews or Tax Acquisition Audits of major privatization engagements). He specializes in Tax Compliance Reviews, Tax Planning, Independent CPA Verification Services, Opinions, Special Tax Studies, Tax Accounting and Risk Advisory Services (TARAS) and Outsourcing works of companies in various industries (i.e., banking and finance, insurance, pre-need, telecommunications, manufacturing, call centers, airlines, and other service-oriented industries). Abbet graduated *cum laude* from Ateneo University with a B.S. Accountancy degree.

CEDRIC M. CATERIO, Audit Services

Formerly a Senior Director in the Assurance and Advisory Services of SGV & Co., Cedric M. Caterio brings to RT & Co. 19 years of experience in financial audits, business process reviews, agreed-upon procedures engagements, and International Financial Reporting Standards conversion projects. Cedric graduated from Ateneo de Davao University with a B.S. Commerce Major in Accounting and attended the Executive Program of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). Under his term as the President of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants-Davao City Chapter from 2009-2010, he was conferred the Leadership Award as one of the Most Outstanding PICPA Chapter Presidents and the Davao City Chapter was awarded the Most Outstanding Chapter for Category A as well as the Hall of Fame Award.

THE CORRESPONDENT OF MAZARS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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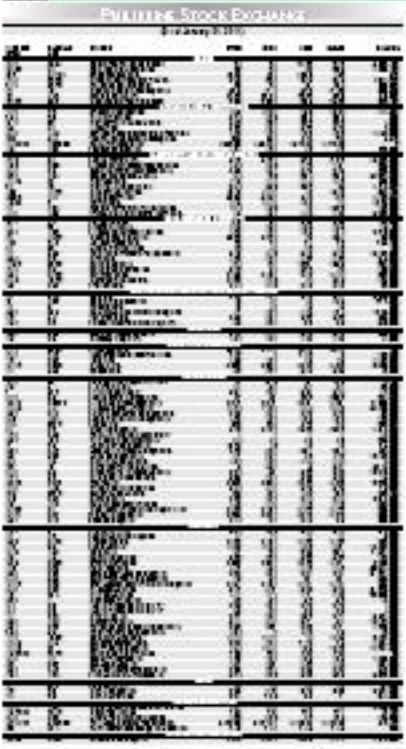

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By Erich C. Dandan

Maynilad

By Nina T. Ordinario

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PH economy still 'mostly unfree,' says think tank

By Bernie F. Dumlao

Country's rating drops to 115th of 183 countries; HK tops list

ECONOMIC FREEDOM in the Philippines, as measured by a Washington DC-based think tank's yearly Economic Freedom Index, has worsened by 0.2 point to 58.2, crashing the country 10 notches to 115th out of 183 countries and territories.

Based on the The Heritage Foundation's 2011 Economic Freedom index, prepared in cooperation with the Wall Street Journal, Hong Kong remained the "freest" economy for the 17th year straight with its score (which ranges from 1 to 100) with only a point.

"The Philippines ranks 21st out of 41 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and its overall score is slightly below the world and regional averages (58.7 and 57.4 points, respectively)," The Heritage Foundation said.

This year's overall score for the Philippines reflects "small reductions in business and labor freedom offsetting modest gains in monetary freedom and freedom from corruption," the group added.

The foundation was referring to four of the 10 criteria used in ranking the countries, with the other six relating to freedom in trade; government spending, investment, financial and property rights.

Economic freedom, as the foundation defines it, "is the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labor and property."

"In an economically free society, individuals are free to work, produce, consume, and invest in any way they please, with their freedom sustained and protected by the state and unencroached by the state," the group said.

"The principles of economic freedom emphasized in the index are individual empowerment, non-discrimination, and the promotion of competition," it explained.

Compared to 2010 scores, business freedom in Philippines worsened by 4.7 points to 43.4 points as the foundation finds that the overall regulatory framework is "burdensome" and the legal framework is "ineffective," thereby holding back more dynamic and broad-based expansion of the private sector.

Labor freedom in the country lost 1.2 points to settle at 50.7 points. While existing labor regulations are "not particularly burdensome," the foundation notes that many of the country's skilled workers have migrated to other countries in search of better jobs and economies.

Freedom from corruption improved by a point to 24 percent, but the group found that the government's unexpected ouster in corruption drive has been occasional.

"Reforms have not improved public perception and are overshadowed by high-profile cases frequently reported in the Philippine media," it said.

The Philippines was best improved in the criterion of monetary freedom, where it gained 3.6 points to 76.2 points, as the rise in consumer prices had been moderate and held steady in 2010.

Since the index was launched in 1995, the Philippines' overall score has languished in the range that the index tags as "mostly unfree" economies.

With a maximum score of 100 points, the index lists countries from the "free" (80 points and higher) to the "repressed" (below 50 points).

The Philippines shares the 58.2 points range with 37 other countries, including neighboring Cambodia (62nd), Indonesia (100th), Vietnam (139th) and Laos (141th) as well as global powers China (138th) and Russia (143rd).

Curiously, centre Egypt ranked higher at 98th and iron Taiwan (99th).

Rear were additions to the list—Afghanistan, Lithuania, Iraq and Sudan—were in the bottom of the rankings, but does not yet the ranking as "not available."

NWSA

NOTICE TO MANILA WATER CUSTOMERS AND THE PUBLIC
NEW WATER RATES FOR THE EAST ZONE

Manila Water

Pursuant to the recommendation of the MWSS Regulatory Office(RO), in its Resolution No. 10-008-CA dated November 30, 2010, and as approved by the MWSS Board of Trustees (BOT) in MWSS BOT Resolution No.2011-008 dated January 13, 2011, effective 15 days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation, Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWC) will implement the second tranche of the approved tariff adjustment under the Concession Agreement (CA) Term Extension equivalent to 6.28% and 3.00% Consumer Price Index to be applied respectively to the 2010 Basic Charge. The MWC's CA Term Extension was approved through MWSS BOT Resolutions No. 2009-013 on April 16, 2009 and subsequently, confirmed on April 28, 2009. The Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Finance issued a Performance Undertaking on MWC's Concession Agreement Term Extension on October 19, 2009.

Manila Water Company, the East Zone concessionaire, covers the following areas: **Manila** (San Andres and Sta. Ana only), **Quezon City** (east of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional and Mindanao Ave., Districts of Tandang Sora, Pasong Tamo and Matandang Balara), **Makati City** (east of South Super Highway), **Mandaluyong City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pasig City, Pateros, Taguig - all in Metro Manila; Rizal Province**

The new schedule of water and sewer rates for all MWC customers is as follows:

1. WATER CHARGE A. BASIC CHARGE	Old Rate	New Rate		Old Rate	New Rate
RESIDENTIAL			**SEMI-BUSINESS**		
1. Consuming 10 cu. m. or less Discounted Monthly Water Bill	P 71.08/month	P 72.45/month			
2. Consuming more than 10 cu. m.					
First 10 cu.m.	P 81.74 /month	P 86.28 /month	First 10 cu.m.	P 81.74 /month	P 86.28 /month *
Next 10 cu.m.	8.87 /cu.m.	10.88 /cu.m.	Next 10 cu.m.	10.88 /cu.m.	19.22 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	16.61 /cu.m.	20.89 /cu.m.	Next 20 cu.m.	20.89 /cu.m.	22.48 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	24.88 /cu.m.	27.78 /cu.m.	Next 20 cu.m.	27.78 /cu.m.	28.55 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	28.58 /cu.m.	31.76 /cu.m.	Next 20 cu.m.	31.76 /cu.m.	32.27 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	30.47 /cu.m.	33.27 /cu.m.	Next 20 cu.m.	33.83 /cu.m.	34.76 /cu.m.
Next 30 cu.m.	31.83 /cu.m.	34.76 /cu.m.	Next 30 cu.m.	32.20 /cu.m.	35.25 /cu.m.
Next 50 cu.m.	33.29 /cu.m.	36.20 /cu.m.	Next 50 cu.m.	34.57 /cu.m.	37.75 /cu.m.
Over 200 cu.m.	34.67 /cu.m.	37.75 /cu.m.	Over 200 cu.m.	36.03 /cu.m.	39.38 /cu.m.
BUSINESS GROUP I			**BUSINESS GROUP II**		
First 10 cu.m.	P 371.46 /cu.m.	P 405.62 /cu.m.	First 10 cu.m.	P 401.04 /cu.m.	P 438.56 /cu.m.
Next 30 cu.m.	37.78 /cu.m.	40.61 /cu.m.	Next 30 cu.m.	40.44 /cu.m.	44.76 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	37.46 /cu.m.	40.84 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	40.08 /cu.m.	44.40 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	37.61 /cu.m.	40.88 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	40.07 /cu.m.	44.74 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	37.60 /cu.m.	41.08 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	41.29 /cu.m.	45.08 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	37.61 /cu.m.	41.28 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	41.49 /cu.m.	45.30 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	37.62 /cu.m.	41.48 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	41.62 /cu.m.	45.66 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.04 /cu.m.	41.94 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	42.13 /cu.m.	46.10 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.26 /cu.m.	41.77 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	42.33 /cu.m.	46.32 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.26 /cu.m.	41.87 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	43.03 /cu.m.	46.97 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.46 /cu.m.	41.89 /cu.m.	Next 100 cu.m.	43.06 /cu.m.	46.65 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	38.88 /cu.m.	42.21 /cu.m.	Next 200 cu.m.	42.19 /cu.m.	47.16 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	38.76 /cu.m.	42.32 /cu.m.	Next 200 cu.m.	43.40 /cu.m.	47.40 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	38.87 /cu.m.	42.44 /cu.m.	Next 200 cu.m.	43.70 /cu.m.	47.72 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	39.08 /cu.m.	42.67 /cu.m.	Next 200 cu.m.	44.02 /cu.m.	48.07 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	39.19 /cu.m.	42.78 /cu.m.	Next 200 cu.m.	44.33 /cu.m.	48.40 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.38 /cu.m.	42.91 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	44.58 /cu.m.	48.63 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.55 /cu.m.	43.13 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	44.86 /cu.m.	48.86 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.65 /cu.m.	43.24 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	45.17 /cu.m.	49.32 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.71 /cu.m.	43.36 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	45.28 /cu.m.	49.50 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.82 /cu.m.	43.59 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	45.70 /cu.m.	49.80 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.03 /cu.m.	43.71 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	46.03 /cu.m.	50.25 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.13 /cu.m.	43.82 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	46.22 /cu.m.	50.47 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.30 /cu.m.	44.08 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	46.54 /cu.m.	50.82 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.44 /cu.m.	44.16 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	46.66 /cu.m.	51.17 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.56 /cu.m.	44.28 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	47.06 /cu.m.	51.58 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.66 /cu.m.	44.40 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	47.36 /cu.m.	51.75 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.87 /cu.m.	44.63 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	47.59 /cu.m.	51.96 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	40.97 /cu.m.	44.74 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	47.92 /cu.m.	52.32 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	41.08 /cu.m.	44.86 /cu.m.	Next 500 cu.m.	48.22 /cu.m.	52.65 /cu.m.
Next 1000 cu.m.	41.28 /cu.m.	45.08 /cu.m.	Next 1000 cu.m.	48.43 /cu.m.	52.88 /cu.m.
Next 1000 cu.m.	41.38 /cu.m.	45.18 /cu.m.	Next 1000 cu.m.	48.75 /cu.m.	53.23 /cu.m.
Over 3000 cu.m.	41.48 /cu.m.	45.30 /cu.m.	Over 3000 cu.m.	48.95 /cu.m.	53.46 /cu.m.

* Because our 2010 water bill is based on actual water consumption as of 2011 Dec. 31, 2010 (the date of last meter reading of water consumed in the previous year), it will be billed as Residential Rate.

B. Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) – A percentage of the Basic Charge subject to periodic reviews and adjustment. The FCDA for the 1st quarter of 2011 is 1.21% of the new Basic Charge.

2. A. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE (EC) – 15% of Water Charge applicable to all customers of MWC

B. SEWERAGE CHARGE (SC)
10% of Water Charge for Residential and Semi Business
20% of Water Charge for Business Group I and II customers

3. MAINTENANCE SERVICE CHARGE

METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per cons.)
1/2" or 13mm	P 1.00
3/4" or 20mm	2.00
1" or 25mm	3.00

METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per cons.)
1 1/4" or 40mm	P 4.00
2" or 50mm	8.00
3" or 75mm	16.00

METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per cons.)
4" or 100mm	P 20.00
6" or 150mm	28.00
8" or 200mm	50.00

4. VALUE-ADDED TAX (VAT) 12% of the Charges 1, 2 and 3

THE MONTHLY BILL IS THE SUM OF 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Approved by:

ANGEL F. DIZON
Chief Regulator, MWSS-RO

Approved by:

LEONINO C. ELOPRE
OIC-Administrator, MWSS

Approved by:

GERARDO C. ABLAZA JR.
MWC President

For further inquiries you may call Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627 or visit www.manilawater.com

Manila Water

What Does Manila Water Aim to Provide?

- 24/7 Potable Water straight from your Taps
- Adequate Pressure
- Affordable Water Services
- Quick Customer Service Response
- Continuous Water Services Despite Extreme Drought and Climate Change

Why is There a Tariff Adjustment?

Manila Water is implementing projects to keep our **water supply continuously reliable** even in the midst of **climate change** or when a **natural calamity** strikes.

Proof that Manila Water is working for you is that our customers did not experience any water shortage during the 2010 El Niño months.

Your Manila Water is also expanding to reach to serve more areas in the Manila East Zone and Rizal towns.

What Else is Manila Water Doing?

Efficient System Loss Controls

This means that more water is off steer leaks and more water goes into your taps.

Cleaning up Manila Bay and our Rivers

This is in support of the Clean Water Act and the Supreme Court decision to clean up Manila Bay.

Providing the same quality services to Marginalized Sectors and Senior Citizens

DISCOUNT Low-income residential households consuming 10 cubic meters or less in a month shall continue to enjoy the **discounted monthly water bill.**

Consumption of Residential Customers	Increase in Water Bill/Day	% of the Est. Zone Population Served
0 - 10 Cubic Meters	P0.00	17%
11 Cubic Meters	P0.08	50%
30 Cubic Meters	P1.00	

5% DISCOUNT Senior Citizen customers consuming 30 cubic meters or less are entitled to a **5% discount** in the basic charge, pursuant to the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010.

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LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
celebrates its
108th Anniversary
Theme: Malinis na Titulo, Pangarap ng Bawat Pilipino

Messages

MALACAÑANG PALACE
MANILA

I join the men and women of the **Land Registration Authority** in the celebration of your **108th Founding Anniversary**. I also congratulate the employees and Registers of Deeds Offices who received awards during this event for their outstanding performance and loyal service.

The LRA's role in our society is quintessential as it is embedded on trust and appreciation and about to lead ownership proceedings. By preserving the rights of our people, you are also contributing to the fulfillment of our mandate to ensure a just social order. This reassures government as your exemplary dedication in public service. Commercial your dynamic in something with our government as we take the straight and righteous path to speculate reforms, and I am confident that you will remain steadfast in your commitments to uphold equity to this state of national interest.

May we be illuminated by the daylight of transparency, accountability and integrity as we remember our country and each one to glory.

BENIGNO S. AQUINO III

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel Nos. 929-66[illegible] to 79, 929-6633 to 35
929-7084 to 85, 929-6252, 929-1664
Website: http://www.denr.gov.ph E-mail: web@denr.gov.ph

My warm greetings to the Land Registration Authority as it celebrates its 108th founding anniversary!

It is often assumed that from the land comes all wealth. Indeed, without land, man will not have access to the most basic of his needs, his food and his shelter. In the country's agricultural context of our economy, many value their lands as the source of their social security and their primary economic asset. Thus, protecting the land property rights of people through an effective system of torrens title is fundamental to achieving sustainable growth and sustainable development.

We value the Land Registration Authority's efforts in implementing new innovations to protect the rights of the people to own land through its system of land titling and registration. Being the central repository of all land records, we look upon the LRA to achieve a clear, updated, accurate and complete system of registration that is accessible to the filipino people.

Notwithstanding the erosion of public confidence in the system which was understandable for decades by unscrupulous elements seeking profit through fraud and confusion, the LRA has continued to serve the people in an organized, steadily fast and unanimous procedure of titles. Of course, I am confident that the LRA remains committed to end to their duties. Through its hardworking and honest officers and employees – some of whom will be honored in this year's anniversary celebration – the LRA stays steadfast in its course of providing our people with improved services and an advanced, more effective system.

I commend the LRA, which has partnered with the DENR's Land Management Bureau for crafting efforts to improve our country's land administration management system. Indeed, by working together in integrated efforts, these two important agencies can help ensure the degree of the integrated system of land administration that provides a stable system of land titling for equitable and economic prosperity.

The LRA has a long history to be proud of and build upon. We wish you the best in the pursuit of your vision and mission, as you journey with us to the future.

Congratulations and Mabuhay!

RAMON J.P. PAJE
Secretary

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
PINGASINAN NA PAMAMAHALA NG LUPAIN
(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

It is with great pleasure and privilege to lead the Land Registration Authority as it celebrates its 108th founding anniversary. For many years, the LRA has been trying to modernize its system through its land titling computerization program. It is through this project that this Authority will be able to realize its mission and vision, to improve the registration system and to contribute to land titles. It is my opinion to expedite the service to the public by streamlining the work process in the LRA and eliminating inconsistencies and gaps and corruptions.

I take pride in one an workers in Land Registration Authority who have strived on to a higher level of competence and professionalism with the help of our on-going land titling computerization projects, even as I exhort them to press on to a higher level for the glory of God and Country, especially now that we have a new leadership that has the moral convictions and the political will to lead us to a path of righteousness.

Mabuhay nating lahat!

RUBEN S. TORRES III
Administrator

LRA's Major Accomplishments

In pursuit of its mandate to protect the integrity of the Torrens System of land titling and registration in the country and compliant with the commitment of His Excellency President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III for good governance through his slogan, "Tuwid na Daan" to Daan," there is a renewed call for the Land Registration Authority to improve its services by eradicating graft and corruption, thus exemplifying integrity in the public service, improvement of personnel management through effective and efficient performance and reallocate our overall service levels.

- **LAND TITLING COMPUTERIZATION PROJECT (LTCP)**

  Full Implementation of LRA'S Land titling computerization project in 181 Registries of Deeds nationwide which has the objective among others of securing land titles and related documents, preventing the issuance of dubious, duplicate and overlapping titles, speeds lot status verification and anytime/anywhere query on land research and ultimately eradicating graft and corruption.

  ✓ **LTCP Over-All Status**

  Out of 168 Registries nationwide, 105 ROs are now operational. As to data conversion, 16.7 million to 24 million titles and documents were already scanned.

  ✓ **Establishment of "Anywhere-to-Anywhere" CCV Kiosk.**

  This CCV kiosk is similar to an LTO branch office and are is already operational at our pilot site at the Reprographics and Computer Division at the 2nd floor of LRA Bldg., in East Avenue, Quezon City.

  This will enable the public to verify documents and/or secure certified true copies of titles from any Registry of Deeds nationwide.

  ✓ **Establishment of a Customer Service or Help Desk.**

  This will serve as a centralized complaint desk to follow-up the status of transactions, file complaints and suggest improvements in our services.

  ✓ To provide a faster and more efficient payment and collection of Capital Gains Tax on the sale of real property before transfer of title to the buyer, LRA initiated talks with Commissioner Kim Henares of the BIR to electronically link the LRA with the BIR data bases. The intention being is to minimize or remove any need for manual intervention and provide efficient and faster turnaround time for all transactions requiring payment of taxes. Example: The payment of capital gains tax on the sale of real property and the issuance of the corresponding certificate authorizing registration (CAR) will be done at the BIR and electronically transmitted to the concerned LRA Registry who will then cause the necessary transfer of title. Note that under this scheme, there is no room for "negotiations" or any "arrangements" for the amount of taxes to be paid.

    An Administrative Order was issued on October 8, 2010 forming the LRA Technical Working Group to spearhead the connectivity effort.

- **PROFESSIONALISM**

  ✓ Regularly conducts meetings with the Real Estate Industry partners such as Batasang's Land Corp.; Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association (CREBA); SHELTAI; Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI); Metrobank; Real Estate Brokers of the Philippines (REBAP); Philippine Association of Realtors Board (PARB); AyalaLand, Inc., Citiland Corp. to come up with programs to find fault our services to the public and also seeking their cooperation as regards proper work ethics of all officials as well as code-of-life employees attuned to the priority thrust of the current administration on professionalism.

  (October 16, 2010—Summit on Land Registration attended by various representatives from our industry partners)

  November 12, 2010— follow-up meeting at the Land Registration Authority)

  ✓ To closely monitor the attendance of its personnel, a Memorandum dated 18 November 2010 was issued purposely to curb the old yet prohibited practices of the personnel in leaving their post during office hours and not for official business.

  ✓ Improved work ethics and raised the level of professionalism, by issuing Memoranda dated 13 August 2010 and 26 August 2010 requiring all officials and personnel of the central office specially those in the field offices to be in their respective places of work by 8:00 A.M. up to 5:30 P.M. daily under pain of administrative liability (Following a mandatory 8 hour daily work)

- **DRIVE AGAINST FAKE LAND TITLES**

  ✓ **Strengthened the Task Force Tibalang Mabini (TFTM)**

  Sustained implementation of LRA Circular No. 98-12 and LRA Circular No. 98-13-HE authorizing the Registers of Deeds to confiscate patently fake titles that are transacted in the Registries and to make a list thereof for proper investigation and action.

  Confiscated a total of 119 fake titles (as of August 4, 2010 to present)

  Entered into a special agreement with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Justice (DOJ) and Komsat as investigation team with the help of private sectors and lawyers.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

✓ **HANDOG TITULO PROGRAM**

Registered and distributed a total of 61, 874 Free Patents, 1,258 Emancipation Patents containing an area of 2,554.4062 hectares and 24, 288 Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) containing an area of 66,238.6487.

✓ **LAND TITLING SERVICES**

Number of decisions and orders for issuance of decrees acted upon ... 676

Number of deeds / instruments / requests for issuance of TCTs / OCTs acted upon ... 642,351

Number of applications for Administrative Reconstitution processed ... 2,338

Number of applications for consolidation / subdivision approved ... 5,710

Number of deeds / instruments / requests for registration acted upon (without issuance of TCTs / OCTs) ... 2,690,618

Number of Consulta resolutions / opinions acted upon ... 165

✓ **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Development and Establishment of LRA Website - www.lra.gov.ph

This will disseminate information to the public such as but not limited to latest services and accomplishments of the Authority, provide an overview of the Land Titling Computerization Project and such other projects as well as a checklist of documentary requirements for RD transactions.

- Set up TV monitors in major Registries both for the entertainment of the transacting public and more importantly, as educational tool.
- Published the "LRA Bulletin," the official newsletter of the agency, as one of the information media showing the significant activities and plans and programs of the Authority.
- Published flyers discussing the features of the Land Titling Computerization Project and the registration process flow under the Philippine Land Registration System (PHILARIS).

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

WANTED TO BUY

NOTICE OF LOSS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LOAN & MORTGAGE

HEAVY EQUIPMENT/ TRANSPORT

CAR LOAN

PUBLIC NOTICES

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

TRACTOR, BIKES AND/OR TRUCKS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

INVITATION TO BID
"AS IS WHERE IS"
1998 ISUZU 6231 / BHA-333
1976 TOYOTA COROLLA / NHK-179
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Customs to celebrate 109th founding anniversary

all systems Go to the celebration of the 109th founding anniversary of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) is in action. Isko already took command with circulars and decrees, while employees from our to para sere si, hanging their dusty mop- for the big spoil shoulders.

Commissioner Angelito Alvarez declared that the celebration will be held from Feb. 4 to 7, signalling that every day activities will start at 8:00 a.m. with

Lito Tiotuico Siason San Juan

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Losing weight fast after childbirth? Your gallbladder could be in trouble

By Jurys Gallego Ysaiova
Contributor

I GAINED about 40 lbs while I was pregnant. I knew it would take about a year to lose it, and I wasn't in a rush. But surprisingly, I lost most of the weight quickly, and at about the 27 lb mark in less than a month, my friends and my obstetrician were cheering me on, even when I wasn't doing anything significant to lose the baby weight. (Hey, cardio!) It is the wonders of breastfeeding.

I was eating normally and didn't have the time or energy to exercise, but I was lacking sleep. By week 4, I had lost 30 lbs without even trying.

When I had severe stomach and back pains and vomiting exactly a month after giving birth, my husband took me to the ER. I was diagnosed with gastritis and sent home with antacids. The next day I was back at the ER, this time with my dad, in even more agonizing pain.

Fortunately, that afternoon, one of my friends (Dr. Clyde Antonnette Dy Andili Bautista of Baranga) mentioned on Facebook that I might be having gallstone attacks. I had quickly Googled it, and all the symptoms fit. I then thought they call my gastroenterologist and consider that possibility.

Heartburn during pregnancy

True enough, after an ultrasound of my upper abdomen the morning after, gallstones were found in my common bile duct. How could this be? Ultrasounds of my belly were taken frequently while I was pregnant. And, in all my readings on pregnancy and birth, I had never encountered anything regarding the propensity of pregnant women to have gallstone problems.

On hindsight, I could have been having gallstone attacks even while I was pregnant. Heartburn is a common pregnancy symptom, especially in the last trimester, and I had it almost all throughout.

Two days before I delivered my baby by emergency C-section, I went to the hospital complaining about severe back pains that wouldn't let up. I was hooked up to a fetal monitor and was told I was already having contractions every five minutes (even if I wasn't dilated), that it was hard labor (even if the pain was not intermittent), and that I had a severe urinary tract infection (also common among pregnant women). But the location of the pain weren't in the "right" areas for such findings. But since I was pregnant, the possibility of gallstones didn't even come up, despite a non-day ultrasound.

During pregnancy, levels of the hormones estrogen and progesterone are higher, which inhibits the gallbladder from contracting and doing the emptying process. When bile lingers in the gallbladder, it's more likely to become concentrated and form stones. About 12 percent of women develop gallstones while they're pregnant and have significant symptoms that may then require surgical removal of the gallbladder, either during pregnancy or in the immediate postpartum period.

Obese women are more prone to developing gallstones. Forty pounds per on during pregnancy and keep on in the postpartum period contribute to the risk of gallbladder problems, too.

Two procedures in two days

Even when I was the one who raised the possible diagnosis to the doctor, Dr. Dy's confirmation still came as a shock to me when he said I had gallstones in my common bile duct, which was causing the pain, and that my gallbladder would have to go.

This meant two procedures on two separate days: an endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), and a laparoscopic cholecystectomy (lap cholie). For the ERCP, Dr. Dy took out the gallstones from the bile duct through my mouth; for the lap cholie, the surgeon made about four small incisions on my abdomen and took the gallbladder out through the incision in my navel.

Both procedures kept me in the hospital for three and a half days, and the pain in between made it the worst week of my life. Not only did my poor husband have to settle hospital and professional fees almost equal to those from our child's birth, but he also had to endure my journey through the pain with me.

The pain was unbearable. I felt like I was

(continued on C2)

Why Pia Cayetano's No. 1 accessory is her lunchbox

By Anna A. Jurdeleza

INTENSE: Many people were trained to a less keen eye.

What you need to know if you're 25 up

AMLINE team, from left: manager Nicole Buenaventura, Assistant brand assistant Paige Dee, Assistant marketing manager Mitzi Arroyo, co-under-against-assistant Pia Cayetano, Andrea senior brand manager Louise Claveria, Yu, Andrea team brand team supervisor Rose Montenegro, Division vice president Rodney Pennington Jr., Hilton in la Rosa, Fourteen marketing director Sherry Ong

Pia Cayetano and Sherry Ong

When does the soul enter the body?

THE EXACT MOMENT when a human soul enters into the human body is a mystery known only to God. Yet, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) have declared that life begins during fertilization.

The conclusion was made during a consultation meeting between the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Philippine Medical Association (PMA).

The PMA delegation, headed by executive director Dr. Ambar Cadiz, through its specialty society, the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, represented by president Dr. Sylvia Concepcion, maintained that life begins during fertilization."

The question that immediately came to my mind was: How did the good doctors know that? What is the basis for this conclusion? Did they talk to the unborn child and was told it received the spark of divinity during fertilization?

I am saddened the Church's stand on this issue. It is based on pure belief or faith, and not on concrete experiences and observations which could be found as evidence or at least some evidential grounds. I am very open to know, therefore, how they arrived at their conclusion. If they cannot provide any rational basis for it, then it should be regarded as mere opinion or hypothesis and not as fact.

I remember a principle in ethics which says that if a statement which is of utmost importance cannot be proved or disproved, then we must give the benefit of the doubt to the person who is in danger. In this case, the unborn child.

Let me explain. Contraception is not the same as abortion, as the Church stubbornly claims. In contraception, there is no fertilization of the ovum by the sperm. Hence, there is no human life yet. In abortion, fertilization has already occurred. Hence, there is human life already existing.

Contraception is not the same as abortion, as the Church stubbornly claims.

Now, if we are going to be very strict in our definition of when life begins, then we must consider the following:

1) 25 percent of all conceptions end in miscarriage.

2) 25 percent end in the first month.

3) 50 percent end in the second month.

4) 75 percent end in the third month.

5) 90 percent end in birth.

6) 95 percent eventually die.

Assuming, of course, that possible hypothetic supposition is a valid conclusion based on the above statistics, then, from a rational mind, it is clear the good, all of the souls going into the body is not there. A difference in individual or individual.

This is consistent with the opinion of American psychic Edgar Cayce. While in a trance, he declared that the time the soul entered the body was not fixed at conception, and that was why he said astrological charts could not be that reliable as indicators of character.

Cayce said such forecasts, to be accurate, should be based on the time the soul entered the mother's womb. But no one could tell for sure when. Therefore, some experts had to use the date and time of birth as basis for astrological readings.

If Mendiola's findings are correct, then the time of the soul's entry into the womb is not fixed at conception, then the Catholic Church's main objection in the Reproductive Health Bill, that it encourages murder/abortion of life, is untenable/unwarranted.

Consequently, it is the duty of the government, as the Church and her followers mistakenly and stubbornly claim. That is why almost all Catholic and Christian countries in the West, including Italy, France, Spain, Poland, England, allow the use of contraceptives.

If the Filipino people and the government are to intervene in the reality of runaway population growth, which has created one of our economic problems, we should not allow the Church to impose its religious doctrines on our country.

The next Tradewoman, Karen de Palma-Gaddi, carries it on Feb. 12. Enter by 1:59 pm and tell us, in not more than 100 words, why you deserve it. Send your entries on Feb. 10-20, Saturday-Sunday, 9 am-5 pm, at Room 308, Prince Plaza II Condominium, Legaspi Street, Quezon, Makati. Call 892-7281 to 89, fax 892-6960, e-mail to [illegible] or visit our website [illegible].

McDelivery launches first Cashless Mobile Ordering System

Fruits, wellness and your waistline

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Eating an apple could lower the risk of diabetes and certain cancers

EVERYONE SAYS an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, people need about 20-35 grams of fiber a day. One apple provides 10-12 percent of your body's daily fiber needs.

Apple-eating pectin, a soluble fiber, the substance used in jellies and jams. Pectin is also found by scientists that specific dietary fibers may help lower cholesterol. Other fruits like bananas, oranges, grapefruit and our tropical mangoes

Studies show a soluble fiber supplement to meet finally and how other nutrients such as Lignin, Cyto-Tufts, and Citrus [illegible] and [illegible] on [illegible] McDelivery has [illegible]

[illegible] even is running glutenin, a flavonoid-type phytonutrient that could be blood sugar. This substance is unique to apples.

A Finnish study discovered that eating the fruit could lower the risk of diabetes. However, the anti-diabetes effect was found in quercetin, a component of the apple's peel, which is also apparent in [illegible] the growth of liver and colon cancers.

A super anti-inflammatory fruit, apples may possibly play a huge role in reducing the risk of a wide range of chronic illnesses or diseases, asthma, cancer and the sickness.

Weight-loss tip

Try a diet of three apples a day (one in-between each meal) along with low-glycemic, high-fiber carbohydrates, good-quality protein, healthy fats (nuts and fish).

Clients who enrolled in the Get in Shape Challenge, organized by nutritionists Tammi Hyman of Washington, [illegible] signed [illegible] night time. After a 12-week period, they lost an average of 18 lbs.

Protection in years

High in Vitamin C, copper and antioxidants, green tea provides your body with nutrients that promote cardiovascular and colon health.

Studies show it can lower cholesterol levels and blood sugars causing clients, also in the colon, thus preventing them from damaging the body.

Rich in Vitamin E, green have a high concentration of folate (the Vitamin B complex group), which can help boost cell production and metabolic activity.

Antioxidants metabolism, including [illegible] [illegible]

Grapefruit control

Contrary to [illegible] citrus fruit is in effective, the [illegible] pomelo (or suha in the Philippines) is back in the picture.

Its high fiber and antioxidant content is low on the glycemic index, making it safe for diabetics. Half a grapefruit has just 60 calories and 8 grams of fiber. [illegible] more than apple.

Berry delicious

Blueberries are high in anti-inflammatory benefits and are packed with phytonutrients, including [illegible] cyanidins, which give them a blue color. Just a half cup of this [illegible] provides an anti-antioxidant.

In the antioxidant chart, blueberries rank high along with broccoli spinach. Small as they are, blueberries help increase improvement of brain energy production.

Avocado's [illegible] vitamin

For a long time, people avoided eating avocados because of its high fat content. A point of clarification: The avocado's fat is monounsaturated, beneficial for heart health.

Avocado is cholesterol-free and high in magnesium, potassium, and nutrients like Vitamins C, E, B6 and glutathione. Avocados raise the level of good cholesterol in [illegible].

For facial mask, mix half an avocado with 2 tablespoons of fresh milk. Mash well and apply on face for a rich moisturizing mask!

All for today. "I am a health and wealth magnet."

Love and light!

Reference: "The Fat-to-Lose Weight Lose Diet" by Michelle Pritchard, MD

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BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

KIKO MACHINE BY TYANO ARION

SEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

Laging nakalimutan ng Diyos sa 3:00 AM 10:00 AM 1:00 PM Lunes hanggang Biyernes

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

TULDOK BY MARA COLL

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

TOO MUCH MONEY Money strong emotionally and not financial issues. Your partner will always spend on comforts and never offer them. Be frank and tell him/her you are much more romantic. Do some home time in the holiday and to work or have something planned to do it will pay off in spirit.

TAURUS (May 21 to June 20) Relations with partners and close friends is unusually sympathetic and better today. Financially, you should be careful when entering loan. Especially those promises that you have.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Relations with partners and close friends is unusually sympathetic and better today. Financially, you should be careful when entering loan. Especially those promises that you have.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) It's not a good day to ask for a promotion today. Financial complications in others, and confusion surrounds you. Be very focused and you'll be successful at present.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Your social contacts are accelerated today. Old friends and relatives. Unique gifts, creative concepts and intriguing ideas are in store. You're a happy to socialize with others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Public communications will involve complex and demanding information today. Be sure to read the fine print and ask questions. Today is a 10 mind-reader.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) This is a very productive, hectic day. Make sure you have all the information you need before you sign anything. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) An intriguing today. You will need to splurge on elegance and luxury. Be careful, however, not to let bad habits creep in or you will be obsolete in these times.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You are especially flexible in the needs and wants of others today. Be aware of this, your accommodating will find somebody has taken you explicit from what's said.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Today is a good day to be kind, understanding and to overlook the mistakes of others. Others you have confidential statements of fear and fear.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Discretion is the way to help those who are less fortunate today. You are overflowing with energy and enthusiasm. Be careful to clarify a misunderstanding. You are that time lovely make light work.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Interaction with others is stimulating and unique. But watch for clarity in letters or misunderstandings. You are that time lovely make light work.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles go to www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	8	9	5	6	4	3	7	1
7	1	3	9	8	2	4	6	5
5	4	6	7	3	1	9	2	8
6	3	4	8	9	5	7	1	2
9	7	8	2	1	6	5	4	3
1	5	2	4	7	3	6	8	9
3	2	1	6	5	9	8	3	4
4	9	5	3	2	8	1	5	6
8	6	7	1	4	7	2	9	7

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

7				8				4
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Difficulty Level ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Down for Tuition's sake
2. Round table
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5. Reading rate
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ENTERTAINMENT

Tribal fun prevails at 'Muziklaban'

By Pocholo Concepcion
Photos by Andrew Tolentino

GREYHOUNDS: vocalist Ray Rubio sings with vigor.

LIGHT of Loss leader Norvin Dy joins the Muziklaban Rock Challenge grand prize.

SALAMANCA: Paulo Valencia sizes

KEYBOARD: Mars Abaya

representing their respective rock Boomers proudly pass behind their affiliations' "Mission ng Cainta!" "Tatlumpu ng Cavite!" "Apay ng Pangasinan!" "Kayabu Pilipinas, Bonifacio Pampanga!" among others.

On run basis, Indierocd like a tarpaulin following the design and color of the Red Horse Beer logo. "Matatalim ng tarpaulin," Abaya

But watching these kids collide with their

TIMES 11

Overlooked tracks in new Gary V CD

REVIEW

By Manny Bajenida
Contributor

Gary Valenciano
"Replay", Universal Records

Between Martin and Gary, the former's got the soul, but latter's got the moves. Gary is fast losing his safe and squeaky clean pop hit, dyed-in-the-wool soul when you get tired on ensemble, right?

Why would we mean Heaven, Gary's 10 tracks of rescheduling songs from previous albums collated in the "final album" collection called "Replay" are as soulful as Indiana praising the Lord could get this side of Chubbacca. Piano-and-vocals journey is following his first ("He Won't Let Go" "Bonus") are similarly . . . complete fun—they are neither melodically interesting enough to merit close attention nor lyrically creative . . . to glow over the religious sentiments. . . . It's secular heroines. . . .

But with

GARY Valenciano

ing shoulder stop vocal beats completing your Gary V CD collection. And this one comes with a 2011 calendar! How hip is that?

Bob.
"B.o.B Presents: The Adventures Of Bobby Ray", Atlantic Records

Refreshingly free of the swinging, mixed-chimpy hermaphrodite vulgarity and an overarching affinity with violence that marked much of rap music's history, B.o.B's debut album showcases instead "cross-over"—some might even peacefully say "mainstream"—approaches to relationships with women, posting order with outlet press, ambition and success, and personal and artistic identity. Co-producers and co-producers are a dozen of his friends in the business that include, yes, Eminem (albeit a more mature one) and Lupe K.

"Nothin' on You," the breakout single, features Bruno Mars, the star whose name Travis McCoy's "Billionaire," and it is produced by The Stereotypikon, the production outfit that took one of the likes of Sugababes and Justin Bieber "Stayhome" late Hayley Williams of Paramore.

The lyrics, so often crude and malignant in rap, are imaginative and civilized in B.o.B.'s songs. Give this CD a listen, as in from the first three singles, and you will find that it's a fun-filled, free-thumbs-up musical trip.

Bro Wayne ready for radio again

FORMER radio DJ Brother Wayne made a rare appearance recently in support of a reunion gig of mainstays of the old Quezon City jazz club Birds of the Asian Swallow and its successor BirDland.

For those whose idea of popular Edwin limited to Mr. Pastor or Pepsi Jash, many young radio listeners in 1960s Manila in the late 1970s looked forward to hearing Brother Wayne's shows on 1MM 1350.

Even if their ears were more than 30 years ago, when Edi could be heard minute-and-did not blather so he could record or bump it's something worth looking back on. The Inquirer sought out the Brother to talk about those times in this e-mail chat.

What do you appreciate most in your radio career?

I was part of a group of jocks which introduced contemporary jazz on radio. There was Ed Peraro, Jing Magnaye, Ronnie Mella, Finky Villanueva, Ronnie Quintos, Charlie Libi, Bodie Locsin to name a few. We were all with 1MM.

Who do you love jazz?

My father was the foremost influence in loving jazz. He loved Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and the big bands—Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Count Basie and the

like. I grew up hearing the music.

Your stint on 1MM was significant because you had a big local audience at that time. What made your stint special?

Twas lucky enough to handle the drive time hour from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. People were too busy to listen to those times so I had a captive audience. I remember asking myself the question, "What would people want to hear, and now what do I want to play?" The formula evolved.

But it was also the time when pop and rock had a similarly big local following. Was this a coincidence?

I really wouldn't know. We were just doing our thing because we felt that the listeners

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odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

Taylor back at No. 2

THE TOP-SELLING albums in the country for the week Jan. 17-23 based on Odyssey Music & Video nationwide sales reports:

TAYLOR Swift

Overall

1) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," Viva Records; 2) Taylor Swift, "Speak Now (Deluxe Edition)," MCA Music; 3) Jessy Beltrán, "Bedlilly," Star Records; 4) Jessy Beltrán, "I'll Do Anything For Love," Star Records; 5) Various Artists, "Dr Popular Demand 2," Universal Records; 6) Bruno Mars, "Doo-Wops & Hooligans," Warner Bros.; 7) Taylor Swift, "Taylor Swift," MCA Music; 8) The Black Eyed Peas, "The Beginning," MCA Music; 9) Katy Perry, "Teenage Dream," Polyfloyd Records; 10) Justin Bieber, "My Worlds: The Collection," MCA Music

OPM

1) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," Viva Records; 2) Jessy Beltrán, "Bedlilly," Star Records; 3) Jessy Beltrán, "I'll Do Anything For Love," Star Records; 4) Various Artists, "Dr Popular Demand 2," Universal Records; 5) Lea Salonga, "Your Songs," Sony; 6) Moira Dela Torre, "Malaya," Universal Records; 7) Ruby Pascual, "Decades 2," Star Records; 8) Regine Velasquez, "Hataw," Universal Records; 9) Gerardo Bautista, "Romance Revisited," Universal Records; 10) Juris Fullido, "Pipti," Star Records

Bro...

From page D1

needed one type of music.

Local FM radio has changed a lot in the last few years. What do you think is right or wrong with it?

From the business side of things, when you think of major examples, the first thing that comes to mind is: Will it bring in commercials? It's no joke running a radio station, right or wrong that's the motivation that I see.

There's something lacking in the jazz being played on the radio these days. Can you comment?

I don't see consistency and content at all.

Would you like to be a DJ again and have your own show soon?

Yes.

Interview by Pichelle Concepcion

Tribal...

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The sounds and scents of V-Day

It's HEAD off the Valentine Day countdown, I asked celebs what sound and scent remind them of their first love. Mine are watercolor and APO Hiking Society's "Batang Bata Ka Pa" Wapak Bisaya Go-Hanis Ong, tired & worthy!

HERMOSAS "I'd Rather" is the song I cannot see without a first crush. The smell of rubbing alcohol reminds me of him because he used it a lot on his hands.

DEDE ALGARE: "Names you may have yet know in high school, Reminds me of our puppy love. The song of Dream Lambert, 'Gif All the

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"Energy, Strings hold memories of my first love."

PRINCESS MENDIOLA: "The theme song of 'Bayani' ('Growing Up') was the hit song back then. I loved the scent of the syrup of soda that came with the ones at Potals and Twigs (Seven Eleven)."

ABEL MIRANDES: "Forever Baby' by Stanley Clarke and George Duke. When I had my first BF that song was playing in his car."

MARIEL LARA-PANGILINAN: "What has never stopped for me is any last love and that's my husband, Anthony. It's fresh floral mahogany daily, and at night lavender/peppermint lotion which I use to massage on his head even as he's talking about the day we had before cuddling mood to express this."

JC MENDIOLA: "The smell of fresh brewed and sausage McMuffin, because I would always see my first crush at IHM before class. SWV's song 'Weak' because that's how I felt every time I saw him/her."

ROSANI MONTEMAR: "I remember my wife and I would listen to 'In Made to Love' over and over again when we were on the bus to Baguio. The sweet smell of her perspiration mixed with her perfume is my first scent of all."

E-mail: metrolifestyle@yahoo.com

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